FAMILY EMPIRES: A FRONTIER ELITE IN VIRGINIA AND KENTUCKY, 1740-1815

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Gail S. Terry

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APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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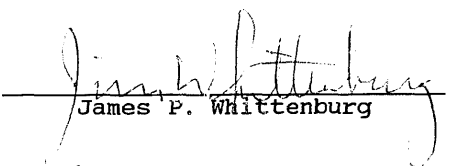

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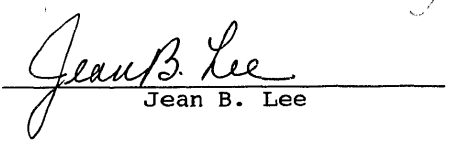

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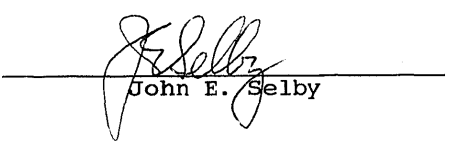

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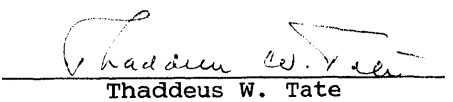

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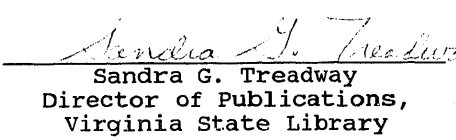

Sandra G. Treadway
Director of Publications,
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For JMH and JPW,

unindicted co-conspirators

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John M. Hemphill II, served as my principal sounding board in this as in all projects. As a historian, he contributed his knowledge of the political and economic history of colonial Virginia. His contributions as friend, confidante, and my most enthusiastic supporter are beyond measure.

My parents, Claude and Fayrene Terry, and my own extended kin network had little direct involvement in the production of this dissertation. But the central place

family and kin held in my early life sparked an interest in family history and helped me to recognize the significance of kinship when I encountered it in my research. This study owes its existence to another group of families, however, those who formed the immigrant elite of western Virginia. What follows is their story.

ABSTRACT

This study traces the social and cultural odyssey of three generations of elite families as they moved from Ireland and Pennsylvania to the Virginia frontier and eventually sent branches into Kentucky. It focuses on the influence of gender roles and kinship in enabling this elite to consolidate its power in Virginia and to extend that authority across the Appalachians.

Although its members were mostly Scotch-Irish, a shared commercial heritage proved more significant than common ethnic origins in defining the culture of this elite. Men entered Virginia as advantaged outsiders. They quickly shifted the focus of their entrepreneurial drive from Britain and Philadelphia to the vast lands of the interior. They succeeded in increasing their wealth, power, and social status in Virginia and in passing on these qualities and the values that underlay them to their sons and grandsons.

Women's roles complemented those of men. While men travelled widely to oversee the government and settlement of a vast frontier, wives remained at home and acted in their husbands' stead. By the time the third generation came of age, however, this role for women had narrowed. Although improved roads enabled wives to travel with their husbands, the increasingly specialized occupations of men, especially the practice of law, limited the involvement of wives in their husbands' daily business affairs. Third generation wives cultivated a more active interest in politics, however, than had their mothers and grandmothers.

Ties of kinship bound nuclear families together into a regional elite, and extended kin networks played important economic and emotional roles. Men cooperated with kin in speculative commercial ventures and looked out for each others' political interests. They offered one another encouragement and support in their economic and educational endeavors. Female relatives assisted mothers in childbirth and in caring for young children. A wide array of kin helped parents educate and socialize their children and eventually influenced a young person's selection of a mate.

Patterns of serial migration made possible the recreation of kinship networks in Kentucky, while letters and visits kept Virginia and Kentucky branches of families in touch. Common concerns--business interests, family news, religious faith, and their children--bound kin on both sides of the Appalachians together into an emerging southern elite.

FAMILY EMPIRES: A FRONTIER ELITE IN VIRGINIA AND KENTUCKY, 1740-1815

INTRODUCTION: AN IMMIGRANT ELITE

In 1738, twelve-year-old Letitia (Lettice) Preston set sail from Ulster with her parents, John and Elizabeth, and her younger brother and sisters, William, Margaret, and Anne. Her uncle James Patton stood at the helm; his wife and daughters were also on board. The Patton and Preston families landed in Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock River in Virginia. From there they made their way west, across the Blue Ridge Mountains into the Shenandoah Valley. They settled in Augusta County, not far from present-day Staunton.

Lettice and her kin ranked near the top of the immigrant elite families who settled the upper Shenandoah Valley. Like the Prestons, most came from northern Ireland, although a few left homes elsewhere in the English borderlands--Wales, Scotland, and northern England. Unlike the Prestons, most did not come directly into Virginia, but landed in Philadelphia or other ports on the Delaware River. From there they made their way into southeastern Pennsylvania and down the Great Valley of the Appalachians into Virginia. Robert Breckinridge, who eventually married Lettice, and John Brown, who became Margaret's husband, made

this trek as small children. The Buchanans, Campbells, McDowells, Skillerns, and Stuarts did likewise.

These families--Patton, Preston, Breckinridge, Brown, Buchanan, Campbell, McDowell, Skillern, and Stuart--along with the Christians, Flemings, Robinsons, and Lewises formed the elite on which this study is based. In addition to their origins in the English borderlands and their immigrant status, these families shared other characteristics and experiences that gave cohesion to the group. Most were Scotch-Irish; all were Presbyterian. They entered the upper Shenandoah Valley at about the same time during the late 1730s and 1740s. From the time of their arrival, the men were among the governing elite of Augusta County, usually holding offices on the county court or parish vestry. They and their sons also held positions of authority in counties carved from Augusta after 1768.

This group of families warrants the title "frontier elite" for several reasons. As leaders of the western-most administrative unit of Virginia government at mid-century, the men held responsibility for enforcing order on an expansive southern frontier. More significantly, as English settlement and government moved west, members of these families followed. In the late 1760s and early 1770s, many moved from the Shenandoah Valley--especially the region that lay between Staunton and Lexington--into southwestern Virginia--first to the James and Roanoke river valleys (near

present-day Fincastle and Roanoke, respectively) and later to the New River Valley (near present-day Blacksburg and Christiansburg) and the Holston River Valley (from present-day Wytheville westward into Tennessee). After the American Revolution they sent branches across the Appalachians into Kentucky and Tennessee. This study examines the influence of kinship and gender roles in enabling this frontier elite to successfully establish itself in Virginia and to consolidate and extend its power into the trans-Appalachian West.

In spite of their common ethnic origins, shared commercial and imperial backgrounds proved more significant than their Scotch-Irish heritage in defining the culture of this elite. Chapter one explores the process by which these immigrant men translated their commercial backgrounds into success on the Virginia frontier, and how they passed on the material trappings of success and especially the values that underlay them to their sons and grandsons. The immigrants brought with them a commercial outlook which prized the acquisition of wealth, power, and social position; yet their ideal of success remained the traditional one of the English aristocracy--one based on wealth, land ownership, education, government service, and a respectable family pedigree. In the pursuit of these goals they demonstrated little comprehension of a distinction between their own private interest and public good. Land speculation provided them

with an avenue to wealth and power, but in disposing of their lands they displayed both a traditional attitude--which viewed land as a family seat to be passed from one generation to the next--and a commercial mentality--in which land was simply another commodity for sale.

Members of the second generation, advantaged by education and birth, built on the economic and political successes of their fathers. They demonstrated the same spirit of enterprise in their business ventures. While continuing to speculate in western lands, they also invested more heavily in trade and agriculture. Both they and their fathers purchased slaves. Kin cooperated in speculative and commercial ventures and generally looked out for each others' economic interests. Occasionally (when failure threatened) these men temporarily disavowed their ambitions. They also expressed sentiments of noblesse oblige that their fathers seldom displayed. Their attitudes regarding paternity, education, and dynastic succession, however, revealed the same commitment to familial values espoused by the immigrant generation.

The ambitious attitudes of their fathers served the men of the third generation well. Several studied law at the College of William and Mary, and their own hard work combined with their inherited social and economic status enabled them to profit from the opportunities created by the American Revolution. They held positions in newly-created

state and national governments, and many moved west where they seized chances for political and economic advancement. These men also recognized and acknowledged a distinction between their own private interests and the good of the public that they governed. Their inherited social status and the successes of their kin probably increased the psychological pain of failure for those men who did not succeed.

Members of the third generation demonstrated the collective mentality of an established elite. They possessed respectable family pedigrees in Virginia. Cousins and brothers encouraged and supported each other in their educational and economic endeavours. While they recognized each other's individual endeavors, they also acknowledged a shared identity and reputation. Kin accepted an obligation to care for those who suffered financial reverses and extended their support to white illegitimate children.

Like the men of the immigrant elite, the women found aspects of their cultural heritage well-suited to life on the Virginia frontier. Chapter two examines how their commercial backgrounds, the unique conditions of frontier life, and Virginia's patriarchal social and legal system combined to shape the lives of three generations of backcountry women. The immigrant generation carried with them to Virginia the tradition of the active wife. While married women rarely functioned as initiators in the world

of commercial affairs, some wives of petty tradesmen and merchants in England, Ireland, and Pennsylvania remained fully cognizant of the economic world in which their husbands operated. They were literate, familiar with forms for receipts and other business procedures, and able to act for their husbands when necessary. In Virginia the family business included land speculation and agriculture as well as trade, but conditions on the frontier insured that the tradition of the active wife would flourish there.

The duties of elite men, who oversaw the government and settlement of a vast frontier region, resulted in frequent and sometimes lengthy absences from home. While men attended to public and private business elsewhere, women managed the family business at home. The migration of families into southwestern Virginia in the 1760s and 1770s, and the disruptions of the Seven Years' War, Lord Dunmore's War against the Indians in 1774, and the American Revolution meant that this aspect of frontier life defined the gender roles of immigrant women and their daughters.

The patriarchal legal and social structure of Virginia proved flexible enough to accomodate the tradition of the active wife, as long as men controlled the terms under which women exercised their knowledge and authority. Some second generation men limited the ability of their widows to function independently in the larger economic world, while leaving them considerable authority (and control of economic

resources) within their families. By the 1780s some women of the second generation also expressed doubts about their abilities to function outside the domestic realm, even as they continued to do so effectively. Some third generation women, even better educated than their mothers, possessed a broad knowledge of legal, economic, and political affairs but found their public roles more narrowly circumscribed.

Chapter three seeks an explanation for the narrower public role of women by analyzing relationships between spouses in the period from around 1770 through 1815. Changing regional circumstances and Revolutionary ideology combined to undermine the tradition of the active wife and to elevate the role of consort or advisor. Improved roads enabled wives to travel with their husbands, and the ideal of the republican mother provided women with a rationale for cultivating their interest in politics. At the same time, the increasingly specialized occupations of the men of the third generation, especially the practice of law, limited the involvement of wives in the daily business affairs of their husbands. These developments are explored against the backdrop of what historians have characterized as the shift from traditional to companionate marriage. The chapter suggests that while the ideal of marriage espoused by the backcountry elite may have shifted, actual marriages contained characteristics attributed to both ideals.

Chapter four returns to the theme of kinship, first developed in chapter one, by analyzing relationships between nuclear families and extended kin to demonstrate how the ties of kinship bound families into the networks that defined a regional elite. Between 1770 and 1815, a wide array of kin shaped the processes of mate selection and childrearing. Aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, and parents all influenced a young person's choice of a marriage partner. As partners became parents, the bearing and rearing of children took place within a supportive web of kinship. Female relatives assisted mothers in childbirth, and naming practices linked newborns to particular relatives and reaffirmed ties between adult siblings and cousins. Grandmothers sometimes provided primary care for young children, and aunts and uncles helped nieces and nephews to pursue their educations. Together parents and kin socialized children in modes of behavior appropriate to members of their sex and class.

Chapter five traces the process by which two kin groups, the Prestons and the Christians, extended their kinship networks across the Appalachians into Kentucky. They not only succeeded in reestablishing networks like those left behind in Virginia on the western side of the mountains, but also maintained contact with Virginia branches of their families. Visits and letters kept family members on both sides of the Appalachians in touch. Common

concerns--family news, religious faith, business interests, and their children--bound Virginia and Kentucky kin together. The maintaining of family ties enabled these kin groups to transcend their provincial status and become part of an emerging southern regional elite.

PRINCIPAL PLAYERS

Patton-Preston Extended Kin Group

Patton Family

James Patton - ship's captain; emigrated to Virginia in 1738; most significant landowner and political figure in the upper Shenandoah Valley; no sons; uncle of William Preston.

Preston Family

Elizabeth Preston - emigrated to Virginia with her brother James Patton in 1738; widowed in 1748/49; never remarried; mother of Letitia Breckinridge; Margaret Brown; William Preston; Anne Smith; and Mary Howard.

John Preston - emigrated to Virginia in 1738 with wife Elizabeth and brother-in-law James Patton; died within ten years of arrival.

William Preston - son of Elizabeth Patton Preston and nephew of James Patton; emigrated to Virginia as a child; county surveyor; land speculator, farmer; Revolutionary

War hero; moved to southwestern Virginia in 1760s; married Susanna Smith of Hanover County; father of John and Francis Preston and Eliza Preston Madison.

Susanna Smith - wife and widow of William Preston; moved to southwestern Virginia in 1760s; never remarried; mother of Francis and John Preston and Eliza Preston Madison.

John Preston - treasurer of Virginia who left office with accounts in arrears; married Mary Radford Preston and Elizabeth Carrington Mayo Preston; father of William Radford Preston; son of William and Susanna Smith Preston.

Francis Preston - lawyer, U.S. congressman, farmer; married Sarah (Sally) Buchanan Campbell Preston; son of William and Susanna Smith Preston; brother of John Preston and Eliza Preston Madison; father of Isaac Preston (illegitimate).

Elizabeth Preston Madison - interested in politics; widowed at age twenty; never remarried; daughter of William and Susanna Smith Preston; sister of Francis and John Preston.

Johnson Family

Edward Johnson - Scottish merchant living in Manchester Virginia; married Elizabeth (Betsy) Smith, sister of Susanna Smith Preston; brother-in-law of William Preston; engaged in joint economic ventures in Virginia backcountry with brother-in-law.

Elizabeth (Betsy) Smith Johnson - sister of Susanna Smith Preston; married Edward Johnson.

Breckinridge Family

Letitia (Lettice) Preston Breckinridge - emigrated to Virginia with parents, John and Elizabeth, as child in 1738; married Robert Breckinridge; moved to southwestern Virginia in 1760s; widowed; never remarried; moved to Kentucky in 1790s; sister of William Preston; mother of William, John, and James Breckinridge and Elizabeth (Betsy) Breckinridge Meredith; stepmother of Alexander and Robert Breckinridge.

Robert Breckinridge - emigrated from Ulster via Pennsylvania with parents; married Lettice Preston Breckinridge; moved to southwestern Virginia in 1760s; father of William, John, and James; died 1771.

John Breckinridge - lawyer, U.S. senator, U.S. attorney general; moved to Kentucky in 1790s; son of Lettice Preston Breckinridge; married Mary Hopkins (Polly) Cabell.

William Breckinridge - unsuccessful son of Lettice Preston Breckinridge; brother of William, John. and James Breckinridge.

James Breckinridge - lawyer, farmer, Federalist; son of Lettice Preston Breckinridge; brother of William and John.

Elizabeth (Betsy) Breckinridge Meredith - daughter of Lettice Preston Breckinridge; married Samuel Meredith, Jr.

Brown Family

Reverend John Brown - emigrated from Ulster via Pennsylvania as a child; Princeton graduate; Presbyterian minister; married Margaret Preston; moved to southwestern Virginia in 1760s; father of John and James Brown; brother-in-law of William Preston; moved to Kentucky in 1790s.

Margaret Preston Brown - emigrated from Ulster as a child with parents John and Elizabeth Preston; sister of Lettice Breckinridge, Mary Howard, and William Preston; married the Reverend John Brown; mother of John and James Brown; moved to Kentucky in 1790s.

John Brown - lawyer, U.S. senator; son of the Reverend John and Margaret Brown; emigrated to Kentucky in 1780s.

James Brown - lawyer, son of the Reverend John and Margaret Preston Brown; moved to Kentucky in 1780s; later moved to Louisiana.

Howard Family

John Howard - wife beater; married Mary Preston, sister of William Preston, Lettice Breckinridge, and Margaret Brown; moved to Kentucky in 1780s.

Mary Preston Howard - married John Howard; beaten by her husband; daughter of John and Elizabeth Preston, sister of William Preston and Lettice Breckinridge; moved to Kentucky in 1780s.

Benjamin Howard - lawyer, governor of Missouri Territory; cousin of John and James Breckinridge and John and

James Brown; son of John and Mary Preston Howard; moved to Kentucky in 1780s.

Christian Extended Kin Group

Christian Family

Israel Christian - merchant, land speculator, politician; emigrated from Ireland in 1740s with wife Elizabeth Stark Christian; moved to southwestern Virginia in 1760s; father of William Christian, Anne Fleming, Mary Trigg, and Rosanna Wallace.

Elizabeth Stark Christian - wife of Israel Christian; emigrated from Ireland; moved to southwestern Virginia in 1760s; widowed; never remarried; made unsuccessful attempt to move to Kentucky in 1780s; mother of William Christian, Anne Fleming, Mary Trigg, and Rosanna Wallace; grandmother of Priscilla Bullitt and Sarah (Sally) Winston Warfield.

William Christian - lawyer, land speculator, politician; married Anne Henry, sister of Patrick Henry; moved to southwestern Virginia in 1760s; moved to Kentucky in 1780s; killed by Indians; father of Priscilla Bullitt and Sarah (Sally) Winston Warfield.

Priscilla Christian Bullitt - moved to Kentucky with parents, William and Anne Henry Christian, in 1780s; married Alexander S. Bullitt, who became her father's executor and was much disliked by the Christian women.

Alexander S. Bullitt - married Priscilla Christian, daughter of William and Anne Henry Christian; served as his father-in-law's executor and had disputes with his mother-in-law regarding the estate.

Sarah (Sally) Winston Christian Warfield - moved to Kentucky with parents, William and Anne Henry Christian, in 1780s; returned to Virginia with mother after father's death; married Dr. Walter Warfield; returned to Kentucky with husband in 1790s.

Walter Warfield - physician; married Sarah (Sally) Winston Christian; migrated to Kentucky in 1790s; attended Lettice Breckinridge during her last illness.

Fleming Family

Anne Christian Fleming - daughter of Israel and Elizabeth Christian; married William Fleming; moved to southwestern Virginia; ran Belmont during her husband's long absences; widowed in 1791; never remarried; mother of Leonard Fleming and Anne Baxter; aunt of Priscilla

Bullitt and Sarah (Sally) Winston Warfield; grandmother of George and Sidney Baxter; sister of William Christian, Mary Trigg, and Rosanna Wallace.

William Fleming - physician, soldier, land speculator, politician; emigrated from Scotland in 1750s; married Anne Christian; brother-in-law of William Christian and Stephen Trigg.

Leonard (Lenny) Israel Fleming - son of Anne Christian and William Fleming; married his cousin Mary (Molly or Polly) Bowyer; moved to Kentucky in 1780s.

Anne Baxter - daughter of Anne Christian and William Fleming; married George Baxter, Presbyterian minister and president of Washington College; mother of George and Sidney Baxter.

Elizabeth (Betsy) Fleming Allen - daughter of Anne Christian and William Fleming; educated with her uncle William Christian's children; married Cary Allen and moved to Kentucky in 1790s.

Trigg Family

Mary Christian Trigg - daughter of Israel and Elizabeth Christian; married Stephen Trigg; moved to southwestern

Virginia; moved to Holston River valley in 1770s; moved to Kentucky in 1780s; after Stephen's death incurred animosity of her family by marrying Bob Daniel.

Stephen Trigg - merchant, land speculator; married Mary Christian; brother-in-law of William Fleming and William Christian; moved to Kentucky in 1780s; killed by Indians.

Allied Kin

Henry Sisters

Anne Henry Christian - sister of Patrick Henry; married William Christian; moved to Kentucky in 1780s; widowed; never remarried; resented her son-in-law's handling of her husband's estate; returned to Virginia and died there in 1790s; mother of Priscilla Bullitt and Sarah (Sally) Winston Warfield; sister-in-law of Anne Fleming; daughter-in-law of Elizabeth Stark Christian.

Elizabeth Henry Campbell Russell - sister of Patrick Henry; married William Campbell and William Russell; engaged in battle with her husband's brother-in-law and executor, Arthur Campbell, for custody of her daughter, Sarah (Sally) Buchanan Campbell Preston; daughter-in-law of Margaret Buchanan Campbell; sister of Anne Henry

Christian, Jane Henry Meredith, and Susanna Henry Madison.

Jane Henry Meredith - sister of Patrick Henry and Anne Henry Christian; mother of Samuel Meredith, Jr., who married Elizabeth (Betsy) Breckinridge, daughter of Lettice Breckinridge.

Campbell Family

Margaret Buchanan Campbell - mother of William Campbell, mother-in-law of Elizabeth Henry Campbell Russell, grandmother of Sarah (Sally) Buchanan Campbell Preston; widow and executor of Charles Campbell; never remarried; moved to Holston River valley where she remained on frontier during disruptions of the Revolutionary war.

William Campbell - Revolutionary war hero; son of Margaret Buchanan Campbell, husband of Elizabeth Henry Campbell Russell, father of Sarah (Sally) Buchanan Campbell Preston.

Sarah (Sally) Buchanan Campbell Preston - interested in politics; daughter of Elizabeth Henry Campbell Russell and William Campbell, granddaughter of Margaret

Buchanan Campbell, wife of Francis Preston, sister-in-law of Eliza Preston Madison.

Individuals

David Robinson - emigrated from Ireland as a child; friend of William Preston; wrote erudite letters on male sexuality; moved to Kentucky.

Catharine North Parke Mathews - emigrated from Ireland via Pennsylvania; outlived two husbands; married Sampson Mathews, member of western Virginia elite; representative of the most a colonial woman of affairs could achieve in wider economic world.

CHAPTER I

TO DIE "RICH AND GREATLY ESTEEMED"[1]: MEN AND SUCCESS IN THE VIRGINIA BACKCOUNTRY

In 1833 sixty-eight-year old Francis Preston remembered his father William as a man who had "spent a life of great usefullness to his country and advantage to his children, for he died rich and greatly esteemed." At about the same time Francis's cousin, Senator John Brown of Kentucky, memorialized the pair's great uncle, James Patton, as "a man of property, enterprise, and influence." Between them, Francis and John summarized the aspirations and values of three generations of elite backcountry men.[2]

A shared commercial culture and common ideals about elite status shaped the lives of three generations of elite men in backcountry Virginia. On the basis of their experience there elite men reaffirmed and redefined these ideals as they transmitted them from one generation to the next. As the memorializations of Preston and Brown suggest, this chapter examines the intertwining attitudes of men toward wealth and the acquisition of it, family and its

proliferation, government service, and social status. Because a man's sense of self-esteem rested on his ability to obtain wealth, power, and status and to pass them on to his (preferably male) descendants, the study also considers the impact of failure on members of the second and third generations.

Elite men who emigrated from the English borderlands--northern England, Scotland, and Ireland--shared a common cultural heritage. Theirs was not the cultural legacy of violence and crudeness usually attributed to emigrants from these regions, however, but one of an expanding British commercial empire. These men consciously used the opportunities of empire to improve their own status. In their pursuit of social, economic and political power they followed the same pattern as successful aspirants to the English aristocracy; different circumstances simply forced them farther afield to achieve their goals. These men succeeded in passing their work ethic on to their sons and grandsons in Virginia, many of whom continued to build on the economic and political successes of their fathers. The sons demonstrated the same entrepreneurial spirit--meaning an ability to recognize and make the most of a changing array of economic opportunities. Those who failed to live up to this standard of achievement suffered considerable loss of self-esteem and the respect of their peers.[3]

If the expanding commercial culture of imperial Britain

fuelled their aspirations, the English aristocracy supplied the immigrant elite of backcountry Virginia with their vision of what constituted elite status. Most historians now agree that the English aristocracy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a comparatively open one; some wealthy newcomers were accepted into it, while other older families dropped out. The worlds of commerce and the landed elite were by no means separate realms. Families of men who made fortunes in trade entered the ranks of the landed aristocracy, and some aristocrats invested heavily in commerce and later in industry.[4]

When British historian J. V. Beckett outlined the path to power pursued by successful aspirants to the English aristocracy, he also articulated the qualities that defined elite status in colonial Virginia. Ownership of land gave one "a fixed interest in the state which conferred the right to govern," but land ownership alone did not insure elite status. A bundle of qualities and qualifications, some of which could only be acquired in the fullness of time, led to a family's acceptance into the elite. The climb to aristocratic status rarely occurred within one generation. Business supplied wealth, and land signified stability, but a proper education, marriage into a good family, government service (including both local and national office holding, as well as military service), and of course, a respectable family pedigree came only with time and usually only to

members of the second and third generations. Social acceptance by one's peers provided the surest indication that a family had achieved elite status.[5]

The Immigrants

Links to their commercial pasts or to military service within the empire can be documented for several prominent immigrants who first settled beyond the Blue Ridge around 1740 and later moved into southwestern Virginia. A close examination of the careers of three men-- James Patton, Israel Christian, and William Fleming-- however, best illustrates the ways that they translated their commercial and imperial backgrounds into success on the Virginia frontier. Patton and Christian both belonged to the merchant community operating out of the Irish Sea basin before settling in backcountry Virginia in the early 1740s. Fleming and Patton came from landed families in northern England and Ireland, respectively, yet both may have been in danger of slipping out of the landed elite at the time of their emigration. Fleming's career differed from that of the other men in two respects. He did not share their mercantile backgrounds, but served as a surgeon in the Royal Navy, and he did not arrive in Virginia until 1755, a full decade and a half after the others. Because of his later arrival and lack of mercantile experience, Fleming's career

resembled those of the second generation of the western elite as much as those of his fellow immigrants. His immigrant status and the intertwining nature of some aspects of commercial and imperial life, however, justify including him with the immigrant generation. Taken together, the careers of all three men show both the common influences of their commercial and imperial pasts and demonstrate the range of variation possible within this shared heritage.[6]

An understanding of the mercantile community that spawned Patton and Christian provides an essential prelude to interpreting their careers in Virginia. Immediately before his immigration to Virginia, Patton operated from a base in the seaport town of Whitehaven in Cumberland County on the northwest coast of England. Across Solway Firth just north of Whitehaven lay the Scottish port of Kirkcudbright. During the first half of the eighteenth century Whitehaven and Kirkcudbright together formed the base for a flourishing trade in tobacco with Virginia.[7]

Family tradition claims that Israel Christian worked as a merchant in Dublin before immigrating to Virginia, but that his family came from the Isle of Man. Members of the Christian family from the Isle of Man also operated as landed entrepreneurs in the coal trade out of Whitehaven in the 1740s. Most Cumberland coal was exported to Ireland. Because eighteenth-century mercantile families often had representatives in several different ports to facilitate

business, Israel Christian, too, may have had direct links to the Whitehaven trade. Even if he did not, however, the role of kinship networks among merchant families suggests that the attitudes and operating procedures of the Dublin merchant community differed little from those of Whitehaven-Kirkcudbright.[8]

If London represented the core of Britain's financial and commercial network, Whitehaven lay on the periphery. Whitehaven merchants had London connections, of course, and traded to Europe, especially France and the Netherlands, and to Dublin and Belfast, as well as to Virginia, but they lacked the political and economic influence of the most powerful London firms. Likewise, a hierarchy of status and power existed among the Whitehaven merchants. At the top sat the Lowthers, a landed aristocratic family who invested heavily in trade and in the coal industry. Somewhat below the Lowthers ranked Walter Lutwidge, James Patton's senior trading partner and employer at the time that the latter embarked for Virginia. Patton, who had already presided over one failed commercial venture, the Kirkcudbright Company, stood well below Lutwidge before being rescued by him.[9]

Lutwidge's career illustrates two trends that later became apparent in the Virginia careers of Patton and Christian. First, the pathway to wealth and status lay in seizing the economic opportunities that presented themselves

and in diversifying one's interests. Second, blatant disregard for the law did not violate one's system of ethics when the realization of ambitions required it.

Like Patton, Lutwidge was born in Ireland and maintained connections with kin there throughout most of his mercantile career. He first appeared in Whitehaven as a wine merchant in 1708. In 1710, Lutwidge entered the Virginia tobacco trade as a ship's captain and made voyages up both the James and Potomac Rivers. The rise of his mercantile career coincided with the growth of the Whitehaven-Kirkcudbright tobacco trade. Although tobacco continued to provide the bulk of his profits, by the 1730s Lutwidge had become a partner in a colliery; he also participated in the timber trade and an illegal wine trade. By 1740 he owned a half dozen ships and shares in several others. By the end of his career, Lutwidge owned an estate in Ireland, houses in Whitehaven, and interests in rope-making, glass-manufacturing, and brick-making concerns. After turning his mercantile affairs over to his son in 1746, Lutwidge was appointed high sheriff of Cumberland County.[10]

In addition to demonstrating the pathway to wealth and power, Lutwidge revealed attitudes toward the law and his own success that would not prove unknown among the merchant immigrants to Virginia. Lutwidge's capitalistic ambitions included a blatant disregard for the law when it interfered

with his profits. In addition to his involvement in the illegal wine trade, Lutwidge (along with most other tobacco merchants) participated in a widespread customs fraud that surrounded the landing and re-export of tobacco. In 1739 Lutwidge shifted his landing port from Kirkcudbright to Whitehaven. In December of that year, after relations between them had deteriorated, James Patton threatened to expose Lutwidge's illegal practices. At that time Lutwidge complained to his agent in Rotterdam that "there is som little favours got in No[rth] Brittan and in order to Intimedate me he [Patton] Declared he wod inform tho he had no more knowledge of any affaires in No[rth] Brittain than you had he never being upon ye spot when I Either shipt or landed."[11]

The fraud concerned the underweighing at importation of tobacco hogsheads intended for re-export, usually to France or the Netherlands. The problem at Whitehaven apparently proved worse than elsewhere in the kingdom; a long investigation of illegal practices in the 1740s resulted in the dismissal of four customs officials there. Whether or not Patton played any role in exposing the illegal activities at Whitehaven remains undetermined. The legislation resulting from the investigation combined with the decision of the French to transfer their business to Glasgow after 1740 led to the decline of the Whitehaven-Kirkcudbright tobacco trade.[12]

Expediency, not ethics, regulated the economic affairs of merchants like Lutwidge in their dealings with the law and sometimes with each other. Reputation and personal relationships still played an important role in the operation of the British merchant community in spite of its far-ranging commercial ventures.[13] The dispute between Lutwidge and Patton on the occasion of the latter's immigration to Virginia demonstrated how volatile the combination of expediency, personalism, and revenge could be.

The quarrel centered on Patton's appropriation of Lutwidge's ship, cargo, and money without his permission. In 1738 the Walpole set sail for Virginia with Patton as captain. On board were his wife and two daughters as well as his sister and her family. The ship's cargo included at least fifteen servants. After their arrival in Virginia, Patton disobeyed orders to return Lutwidge's ship to England within the same season, and he used the cargo as well as L50 of Lutwidge's money to establish himself in the colony.[14]

Upon learning of Patton's activities, an enraged Lutwidge denounced him to agents in various ports in Britain, Virginia, and Europe. To James Johnson in Virginia he wrote, "I have mett wth Boath Knaves and fooles in plenty and but few Honest Industrious men, but of all ye Knaves I Ever mett with Patton has out don them all . . . he Chargd no Less than 6000 Lbs. of fresh Beefe in Virga. 40 Barls

Indian Corn and Every thing Else in proportion tooke 15 Servts to him Self . . . In short Hell it self Cant out doe him." To Robert Herries in Rotterdam Lutwidge complained that "he [Patton] resolv'd as it was to be his last Voya[ge] to Stick at nothing to Gett money." Lutwidge clearly believed Patton had violated his trust.[15]

For his part, Patton may have believed that Lutwidge owed him the value of the goods and cash that he seized. The voyage in 1738 was not the first business transaction between the two men. Lutwidge had been indebted to the Kirkcudbright Company, a failed mercantile firm headed by Patton. Although he initially believed Patton had been ill-used by the other partners in the Company, the Walpole incident changed Lutwidge's mind.[16]

The fact that he returned to Whitehaven with the Walpole in 1739 suggests that Patton never intended to permanently abscond with Lutwidge's ship and cargo. But his seizure of the goods and funds without permission gives credence to the notion that Patton, like Lutwidge, embraced expediency as a guiding principle in business. While Lutwidge railed against Patton on two continents, Patton threatened to expose Lutwidge not only for participating in the customs fraud at Whitehaven and Kircudbright, but also for trading goods in Virginia "not taken in in England" as the Navigation Acts required.[17]

Eventually Patton and Lutwidge reached a settlement

concerning their debts to each other. The altercation revealed the single-mindedness with which Patton pursued his own goals, however, without regard to their effects on Lutwidge's interests. This devotion to his own ambitions served Patton well in Virginia.

Forty-six-year-old James Patton intended his move to Virginia to improve both his fortune and status. Before the Walpole left Britain he had established connections with important Virginians and arranged his next investment opportunity. He joined Irish emigrant John Lewis, probably a kinsman, in a scheme to settle families from Ireland on the backcountry lands of William Beverley, a member of one of Virginia's most prestigious ruling families. By August 1737, Patton had secured himself a share of Beverley's 30,000 acre grant in the Shenandoah Valley. Beverley outlined the terms of their agreement. "I am willing you shoud hold one qur. part of it [the land] being at 1/4 pt. of all ye charges & doing your utmost endeavour to procure families to come in & settle it & I am satisfied to allow your pocket expenses to be brot in as a charge agst the Land, & as for differences yt. may arise between us I am willing to referr them as you propose tho' I can't conceive there can any arise for we all 3 propose to make money of the Land & to yt. End I propose to hold it undivided & to sell out & make ye most we can of it, Unless either of us shou'd have a mind to make a settlement there for our own

use & yn. he might have what we have occasion for laid off & appropriated for yt purpose." Beverley stressed to Patton that he expected money, not goods or servants, for the land "unless you should have any tradesmen or gardners to dispose off" or "yt bolting mill or machine I wrote to you about."[18]

The arrangement with Beverley introduced Patton to the commercial possibilities of western lands. His career as a land speculator in backcountry Virginia proved phenomenally successful. He and Lewis settled thirty-six families on the 30,000 acre grant they held with Beverley. In doing so they fulfilled the terms imposed by the Virginia Council for having their ownership of the land confirmed. In 1745 Patton and nineteen others, including everyone from his own brother-in-law to the crown's Receiver General of Virginia, obtained a grant for 100,000 acres on the New, Holston, and Clinch rivers. In 1749 Patton joined forces with John Smith, Zachary Lewis, William Parks, and Benjamin and William Waller in a land company formed to settle a 50,000 acre grant on the James and Roanoke rivers. Like several of Patton's partners in the New-Holston-Clinch grant, most of his partners in the new company were well-connected members of Virginia's provincial elite, although not of its planter aristocracy. Lewis was a noted Spotsylvania County attorney; Parks served as public printer for the colony; and Benjamin Waller concurrently held the posts of Clerk of the

General Court and of the Secretary's Office.[19]

Patton served as agent for both the partners in the New-Holston-Clinch grant and the members of the later company. He oversaw the surveying, filed the necessary paper work in the Secretary's Office, and handled sales. In return he received a ten percent commission in addition to his share of the profits. Patton's partner and future son-in-law, John Buchanan, shared agent's duties with him for the New-Clinch-Holston grant, and his nephew William Preston served as his principal assistant on both grants during the 1750s. Land speculation, not agriculture, remained Patton's chief business, although he invested in farmland and slaves for his descendants. In time Patton purchased the shares of several of his partners in the New-Clinch-Holston venture.[20]

Political success parallelled Patton's economic success. His connections with prominent Virginians insured that when Augusta County was organized in 1745, Patton's name appeared first in the commission listing the justices for the new county. He was also among the original vestrymen of the county and held the highest rank in the county militia. In 1751 the Virginia Council appointed Patton one of two commissioners to represent the colony at the negotiations for a treaty with the Iroquois held at Logstown, Pennsylvania. His election as burgess from Augusta County in 1755 capped Patton's political career.[21]

By 1751, Patton's political power in Virginia proved substantial enough to secure a commission as deputy surveyor for his nephew and agent William Preston, but such had not always been the case. In his haste to place John Buchanan in a similar position several years earlier to assure his own economic advantage, Patton blatantly flouted Virginia law. County surveyors controlled access to unpatented lands in Virginia; they decided when to make surveys and for whom. The masters of the College of William and Mary held the sole authority to commission surveyors in colonial Virginia. Thomas Lewis, son of Patton's first speculating partner in Virginia, held the post of surveyor for Augusta County. Years later Lewis was called to testify concerning "whether Colo. Buchanan was duly commissioned by the masters of the Colledge to Survey." He pled ill health to avoid appearing in court and later explained to William Preston, "I suppose you know he [Buchanan] was not, he only gave a Bond to me for ye due performance of a Deputy . . . all this was done, not indeed with my approbation but at ye pressing Instance of Colo. Patton, a circumstance that my giving way to has given me many times much uneasiness."[22]

James Patton enjoyed the returns from his Virginia venture for fifteen years. In July 1755, he was killed by Indians on his property at Draper's Meadows in the New River valley. The estate he left behind stood as silent testimony to his mercantile background and the use he had made of it

in Virginia. His chief assets consisted of 6,000 acres of patented land and £3700 of debts due to him, probably for land purchases. The surprisingly small inventory of his personal property included a desk, bookcase, money scales, and an ink holder. Only a wig in a box, several suits of clothes, a pair of "channeld" pumps, a looking glass, and a half dozen books indicated his elite status.[23]

One reason for the small size of Patton's estate was that he had already begun passing on his wealth to his children. In a will drawn up in 1750 after the death of his wife, Patton revealed his ideas about family and land. He left his daughter Mary, wife of William Thompson, five slaves; his home, Springfield, on the South River near Staunton; and the Indian Fields, 3,000 acres on the Holston River. He entailed the entire estate, both land and slaves, on Mary's young son James "& so on to the eldest of the Male Isue forever." Patton devised an additional 3,000 acres to Mary's husband William to provide for any children the couple might have in the future. William was empowered to sell the land, but the proceeds of the sale were to be invested in slaves for his other children and for educating James and keeping his estate unencumbered.[24]

Patton's daughter Margaret, wife of his partner John Buchanan, received two slaves and four tracts of land, all entailed on her daughter Mary. Should there be a failure of heirs in Patton's direct family line, this property was to

"fall to my sister Preston, she is only to have it for life and after her death to go to her son William Preston & his heirs intail forever . . . They are not to sell any of the above land or Negroes or their Isue but may sell the Land at a Yearly Rent for their Life only." Patton ordered his backcountry lands to be sold "at three years credit cleare of interest and the Money . . . Laid out in Negroes" to be equally divided and entailed on his grandchildren James Thompson and Mary Buchanan.[25]

Patton's will reveals a strong sense of dynasty combined with a commercial mentality. He viewed land in two ways. Special tracts were to be kept within the family and passed from one generation to the next. His use of both primogeniture and entail suggests that he aspired to become a country gentleman or at least to have his family regain the status enjoyed by his father. Other lands clearly fell into the category of commercial commodity. These were to be sold and the proceeds from the sale invested in slaves, a portable form of wealth whose value increased over time as their numbers multiplied. In Virginia, of course, slaves also were linked to commercial agriculture.

Although less fully documented, the career of Israel Christian roughly parallels that of his rival, James Patton. Christian, too, settled beyond the Blue Ridge before the formation of Augusta County. He became a successful merchant in Staunton and served as commissary for several

military expeditions during the Seven Years' War. In 1755 he and Patton's nephew, William Preston, engaged in a joint venture to import servants. By that year he also held the rank of captain in the Augusta County militia. In 1759 the vestry of Augusta Parish elevated him to their number, and between 1758 and 1765 he served as a burgess from the County. Around 1765 Christian moved from Staunton to the New River valley in southwestern Virginia, where he continued to keep a store. When Botetourt County was created from Augusta in 1770, he was named a justice of the quorum.[26]

Unlike Patton, Christian apparently did not share in the large land grants authorized by the Virginia Council between 1720 and 1755. Perhaps he lacked the necessary eastern Virginia connections. Although he owned significant amounts of land in Augusta and Botetourt counties, evidence for Christian's career as a speculator post-dates the Seven Years' War, when access to western lands came primarily through buying land warrants awarded for military service. During the entire pre-Revolutionary period Christian also lacked the influence both Patton and his counterpart John Lewis exercised through their control of county surveyorships in western Virginia. Christian's bid to speed up the inevitable division of Augusta County in 1767 and secure the surveyorship of the new county for his son William failed. The surveyorship of Botetourt county,

created in 1769, went to William Preston. Nevertheless, by the time of his death in 1784, Israel Christian had patented over 8,000 acres of Kentucky land.[27]

Like Patton, however, Christian began distributing his wealth among his children long before his death. He conveyed a marriage portion to his daughter Anne in the 1760s and 1770s under terms that revealed the same preoccupation with dynastic succession as James Patton's will. Anne Christian did not receive her dowry when she married William Fleming in 1763, but in 1768, after the birth of the couple's first child, Leonard Israel. The Flemings rejected Israel Christian's initial offer to convey Belmont, the 500-acre farm where the couple lived, to Anne because the terms of his grant failed to protect William's right of curtesy and because the land was entailed on Anne's children, regardless of who their father was. Finally, in November 1768 Christian recorded a deed granting the farm to "my said daughter Anne during her natural Life . . . and after her Death . . . to Leonard Israel Fleming the eldest son of my sd. Daughter & His Heirs & assigns for ever but in Case the said Leonard Israel Fleming shall not be alive at the Death of my Daughter then to such Child, or Children, as [she] . . . shall have by the sd. [William] Fleming & as she shall leave & devise to by her will, but in case my said Daughter shall die without Issue then the sd. Land to revert back to me & my Heirs."[28]

The Flemings remained dissatisfied with the terms of the grant. In 1773 Stephen Trigg wrote to his sister-in-law, Anne Fleming, "Your Mother is Just now with us, & I think Seems very uneasy, Least you shou'd Blame her for capt. Christian's not makeing over the Land to Capt. Fleming last Court. but I can Assure you in my Opinion that your mamey all the time the Old Man was away was in Hopes every thing wou'd be settled to your Satisfaction. before he Return'd. & as he did not she really is very Uneasy & am sure will do everything in her power to get it done Satisfactory to you all; . . . [she] Beggs that you may not be uneasy & she Hopes that every thing will be settled to your satisfaction at the Next Court."[29]

At the next court for Botetourt County an agreement between William Fleming and Israel Christian and Elizabeth, his wife, was ordered to be recorded. Fleming purchased the reversion of Belmont from his wife's parents for five shillings. Under the renegotiated terms of the grant, if Anne died childless, the land reverted to "William Fleming his Heirs and assigns for ever." Only Christian's death ended the struggle over which man would determine the succession of Belmont. In September 1785 William Fleming purchased all rights to the property from his son Leonard for £1000. Probably Leonard had already decided to move to Kentucky, which he did in 1789, and no longer needed or wanted his Virginia inheritance.[30]

The state of Virginia had abolished entail by the time Israel Christian made his will in 1784, but he went to great lengths to insure that his lineal descendants, including his daughters, controlled the disposition of the real estate he left them. His daughter Rosanna received 1,000 acres in Kentucky "independent of her present or any futher Husband and to be Wholey her own and at her own Disposal." Anne Fleming shared equally with her brother William Christian any lands not specifically devised in the will, but their father stipulated that her half was "to be her own property & at her own disposal independant of the present or any other husband." Christian also conveyed nearly 7,000 acres of Kentucky land to three grandsons and four granddaughters. Unlike James Patton, however, nothing in his will indicated that Christian viewed land as anything other than a commercial commodity. His concern was that he and his direct descendants should control and benefit from the disposition of it.[31]

Christian's son-in-law, William Fleming, who emigrated to Virginia a decade and a half after Patton and Christian and who was a full generation younger, embodied qualities found in both the first and second generations of the backcountry elite. His father had resided at the estate of Reston in northern England until financial reverses forced him to sell the property and move across the border to Jedburgh, Scotland, where William was born in 1728. His

mother, Dorothea Satterthwaite of Ambleside, continued to hold property in Westmoreland County, England, independently of her husband and later passed it on to her children.[32]

After receiving a classical education from a private tutor in Dumfries, William attended medical school at the University of Edinburgh. Family tradition claims he spent seven years as a surgeon in the British navy before emigrating to Virginia in 1755. In Virginia Fleming served as assistant surgeon in George Washington's regiment during the Seven Years' War. When the regiment disbanded in 1762, Fleming settled in Staunton to practice medicine. After his marriage to Anne Christian, the couple moved to Belmont, on a tributary of the Roanoke River in southwestern Virginia. When Botetourt County was created in 1769, Fleming became a justice of the quorum. In 1774 he commanded the Botetourt County militia at the Battle of Point Pleasant, and during the Revolution he represented Botetourt, Washington, and Montgomery counties in the state Senate.[33]

Documentation of Fleming's career as a land speculator dates primarily from the early 1770s. He coordinated his speculative efforts with two brothers-in-law, William Christian, and Stephen Trigg, a New River merchant who was married to his wife's sister Mary. The group also cooperated with the Revolutionary hero Patrick Henry, brother of William Christian's wife Anne. By 1780 Fleming owned more than 9,000 acres of Kentucky lands in addition to

the Botetourt county farm, which he had nearly doubled in size. His correspondence with his brothers-in-law and connections reveals much about his and their attitudes toward land and land speculation.[34]

In 1779 Trigg wrote to Fleming about a proposed trip to Illinois where he hoped to acquire land. Trigg recently had suffered financial reverses, and Fleming had allowed valuable lands in Ohio to slip from his grasp. Trigg maintained that "a Man in desperate circumstances, will at times attempt desperate Things; This is truly the case with me . . . My plan if I can execute it will turn up something clover & if I cant & dont loose my Life in the attempt--I shall only loose so much time." Trigg, who apparently had played a role in the loss of Fleming's Ohio lands, added, "I could wish to do something for you there, if any thing can be done, but the risk is so great, that I can by no means recommend any thing. But shou'd you think of anything, that you would choose to venture at you can command me, As I hope you are Satisfied that there is nothing that I can do for you, that I wou'd not most cheerfully undertake."[35]

William Christian already had tried to help Fleming save his Ohio lands. In a letter written a few days after Trigg's he inadvertently revealed Fleming's motives for speculating while trying to justify his own actions. "I know off no Nation, Society or Individuals, but will strive and use every method practicable to save Countries.

Therefore I thought & think still I was Right that Land is worth £15,000 now . . . [and] will sell for more when the eldest child you have arrives at age. However as it is gone it must be submitted to and while there is Food and Raiment a past Error ought to be forgotten . . . It is true it is none of my business to interfere with it; but it is not easy for me or I suppose any Person else to see a near Relation ruined at one Stroke without lending some relief where the least Probability remains."[36]

The letters to Fleming suggest that he did not share the merchant's propensity to take risks. He wanted a secure investment that would insure the futures of his children. Although written in 1795, twenty years after entail had been abolished in Virginia, Fleming's will revealed a strong attachment to the notion of dynastic succession of landed estates. He left 700 acres of Kentucky land to his son-in-law Carey Allen "and his heirs forever." The farm, Belmont, went to his sons William and John "& their heirs forever." Land devises in fee simple, which explicitly conveyed the right to sell, usually were stipulated by the phrase "to _____ and his heirs and assigns forever." Fleming's will conspicuously omits any reference to "assigns." The term "heirs" carried several distinct legal meanings in the eighteenth century, but one of the most common was a person who succeeded to an estate upon the death of his or her ancestor. Not all Fleming's devises carried the tag "and

his heirs forever," however. He left 700 acres in Kentucky to his daughter Dorothea with no restrictions and divided the remainder of his Kentucky lands between his daughters Anna Christian and Priscilla, again with no restrictions. Fleming authorized his executors to sell "any part of my Estate real or personal for the payment of my Debts," but presumably, if lands were to be sold those devised with no restrictions would go first. The restrictive phrase "& his heirs forever" applied only to Belmont and to land given to the husband of Fleming's only married daughter, a fact which suggests that Fleming sought to provide his sons and the family of his married daughter with lands for a family seat. In this respect Fleming's attitudes toward land resembled those of James Patton but differed from those of his father-in-law. [37]

William Fleming and his speculating kin and neighbors maintained few distinctions between the public good and their own private interest. In May 1779 while Fleming served in the Virginia legislature, his southwestern Virginia neighbor William Russell wrote to him that he expected the assembly would open the land office and "am happy when I consider that your good offices will not be wanting to plan the most salutory law for that purpose . . . I hope it may be the sentiments of the legislature to provide in the bill for all unlocated warrants, it will be a provision very interesting to me, having one of three

thousand acres in my possession . . . your attention to my interest in the claim will lay me under the most lasting obligations." While Fleming himself was actively involved in speculating in Kentucky lands, Governor Thomas Jefferson appointed him head of a four-man commission to settle land claims in Kentucky. In the course of pursuing the commission's business, Patrick Henry asked Fleming to help locate "a valuable Warrant on an old Survey of mine on Ohio which I am anxious to secure near the Great Bone Lick . . . I beg it as a particular Favor." Service on the commission does not appear to have interrupted Fleming's own speculative activities and may have furthered them.[38]

Fleming lacked the mercantile background shared by Patton and Christian, which may explain why his brother-in-law Stephen Trigg, also a merchant, found him unwilling to take risks. Nevertheless, his career as a surgeon in the royal navy exposed Fleming to the wider commercial world of imperial Britain. He proved willing enough to take calculated risks by engaging in land speculation, but the terms of his will suggest that his goal in doing so remained to supply his own children and grandchildren with family seats.

Patton, Fleming, and Christian all carried with them to Virginia a commercial outlook that prized hard work and worldly success-- the acquisition of wealth, power, and social position. Their own sense of self-esteem, especially

for Patton and Christian, probably rested more on the realization of their ambitions than on adhering to any abstract ethical code in achieving them, although the degree of ruthlessness with which each pursued wealth and power varied. Patton ignored his partner Lutwidge's business interests when they conflicted with his own and broke the law in Virginia when it suited his purposes. Christian struggled with his own son-in-law for ultimate control over the disposition of Belmont, even though both probably shared the same goal-- securing the transmission of the estate to Fleming's children and Christian's grandchildren. Even Fleming and his kin acknowledged few distinctions between private interest and public good in their speculative activities.

In addition to their aspirations for wealth and power, Patton, Christian, and Fleming also shared certain traditional attitudes toward family rooted in a common perception of the relationship between elite status and the dynastic succession of lands. All sought to found dynasties. Both Patton and Christian began the process of transferring wealth to their children before their own deaths but after they had grandchildren. Fleming and Patton, whose fathers had owned landed estates, expressed the desire to keep specific tracts of land within the family for generations. Christian proved less concerned with keeping any particular plot in the family than with insuring

that his lineal descendants controlled the disposition of it. The struggle between Christian and Fleming over who would control the ultimate succession of Belmont illustrated the importance of establishing one's own dynasty. Finally, Fleming's concern that the lands left to his sons and the husband of his only married daughter should pass to them "& their heirs forever" reveals a dynastic intent that the abolition of entail as a legal device could not fully suppress. This traditional sense of family coexisted with a risk-taking commercial mentality in each of these individuals. The immigrant generation succeeded in passing on wealth, political power, and social status as well as the values that underlay them to the second generation.

William Fleming had characteristics in common with both the first and second generations of elite backcountry men. Like the immigrant generation, he spent his early adulthood in the wider world of the British commercial empire. He was also a contemporary of the second generation men who came of age during the 1750s and 1760s, however, and he shared many of the same experiences that shaped their lives.

The Second Generation

By the time that Fleming settled beyond the Blue Ridge in 1762, backcountry society had acknowledged the status of the sons of the western elite. Fleming moved in the same

circle as Israel Christian's son William and James Patton's nephew William Preston. The group also included the sons of John Lewis, Thomas (the surveyor), Andrew, and Charles. Ranking slightly below Christian, Preston, and the Lewises, stood David Robinson, George Skillern, and Alexander Stuart, all sons of Augusta County gentry. Like their good friend Preston, Robinson and Skillern had emigrated from Ireland as children. Stuart was born in Pennsylvania after his parents left Ireland. Most of these men fought on the frontier during the Seven Years' War and many joined the expedition of Lord Dunmore, governor of Virginia, to fight the Indians on the Ohio River in 1774. All served the patriot cause during the American Revolution.

The men of the second generation shared the aspirations of their fathers, and most succeeded in advancing their own and their families' social, economic, and political status. Land speculation remained the basis for their fortunes, but they supplemented their speculative activities with trade and agriculture. They assumed responsibilities of government that in some ways superseded those of their fathers and began to express sentiments of noblesse oblige absent from the correspondence of the earlier generation. As they had been advantaged by birth and education, they sought to pass on to their own children the advantages of education and gentility. Because they were expected to succeed, the second generation perhaps faced the possibility

of failure with more anxiety than had their fathers, certainly they articulated this fear more clearly.

Most of William Preston's wealth initially came from his father's share in his uncle's speculative ventures, but much of his intellectual legacy came from James Patton. After Preston's father died in 1748, Patton, who had no sons of his own, arranged for his nineteen-year old nephew to study history, mathematics, and penmanship with the Reverend John Craig, minister of Tinkling Springs Presbyterian Church. Later he sent Preston to post accounts for a merchant in Staunton before taking him on as his own personal assistant in the land business. In the early 1750s he encouraged Preston's habit of self education through books by inviting him to "take an account of" ten to twelve pounds-worth of "docters books . . . & Carey wt you want home with you." Throughout his life Preston continued to purchase books for his own edification and later for the education of his children.[39]

The letters of Preston's friend and contemporary, David Robinson, best reveal the economic aspirations and values of the young men of the second generation. Robinson's letters, models of eighteenth-century wit and erudition, reveal the extent to which the men of the first generation succeeded in securing formal educations for their sons, despite the primitive frontier conditions in which they reared them. The letters also demonstrate the degree to which the sons

accepted the values of their fathers in pursuing wealth, power, and social position.[40]

In a letter to Preston in 1763, Robinson interrupted a long discourse on the qualities of mind necessary to "make a man happy"--virtue, competency, and passion--to reflect upon the relationship between wealth and personal satisfaction. "I can no means be dissuaded from the Pursuit of Riches, well knowing that agreeable to the prevailing Taste in all Ages SOVEREIGN MONEY makes the only Distinction among Mankind, which if I be Ever happy enough to procure I shall then, no Doubt, be possessed of every amiable Qualification in an eminent Degree."[41]

Power and social position completed the trilogy by which elite men defined their own success. A falling out with Colonel John Chiswell, owner and operator of the New River lead mines and a member of the eastern Virginia gentry, in 1764 caused Robinson to temporarily retreat from his ambitious pursuit of power and position. He wrote to William Fleming that "I find to my Great Mortification, that I am no Ways capable of insinuating myself into the good Graces of the Great and therefore have often wished myself again in my former little narrow sphere, when my sole Ambition wou'd aspire no higher than just to please myself and a few friends."[42]

The following year Robinson again sought to retreat from the responsibilities of wealth and position and the

ideals that promoted their pursuit by retiring from an unspecified office. Fleming chastised him, noting that "It is certainly a Crime to indulge such Englorious Ease when we can be of Service in the World, and that we are not born for Ourselves." Robinson responded by claiming that "Self-Love Compells me to prefer my own Happiness to that of every other Creature; and if in some Cases I find it not in my Power to be of Benefit to Society without necessarily ruining all my Ease & Quiet, my Duty is then, I think, clear and obvious . . . . It's true Ambition and Avarice employ most Men's thoughts, yet they are such uneasy Habits that we do not indulge them out of Choice but from some Necessity either real or imaginery."[43]

Despite Robinson's momentary lapse into ease, he closed his letter by promising to see Fleming at the next court. He went on to serve as a justice of Botetourt County beginning in 1770 and joined others in an attempt to found a "seminary of learning" in Fincastle in the 1780s. Robinson died a wealthy man in Kentucky in 1806. Nevertheless, his temporary setbacks in the quest for wealth and power caused him to momentarily disavow his ambitious ideals. More serious economic or political failures often brought despair and disgrace to elite men.[44]

In 1770 Robinson's brother John fell deeply into debt. David wrote to William Preston that "I dout he has not alternative but wither to pay the Whole or go to Prison.

The former is at present impossible, and the later will prove ruinous. If you can do any Thing for him at so great a Crisis, I will if possible for me, see you indemnify'd." Preston apparently saved John Robinson from financial ruin. In 1774 he wrote to his brother-in-law Edward Johnson, a merchant in Manchester, Virginia, that "Capt. Robinson has fallen some Money in my Debt. He sends this Hemp to you in payment thereof, he tells me it is very good his word may be depended on as he is an honest man. I hope you will allow him the highest prices you can afford & . . . place it to my Credit."[45]

Perhaps the general economic dislocations during and immediately following the American Revolution cushioned the blow to both reputation and self-esteem caused by financial distress, but some embarrassment persisted. In 1794 Alexander Stuart, a delegate from Rockbridge County during the Revolution, responded to a suit for debt brought against him by claiming that "A series of misfortunes during ye late war has much impaired My Estate & I do not consider myself able to pay any Considerable sum independent of my lands which are fully equal to ye payment of all My debts and to accomplish which I am determined to part with ye last acre." In 1781 William Preston gently explained in a codicil to his will that he was replacing his brother-in-law Francis Smith as an executor because he "hath since March 1777 unhappily rendered himself incapable of transacting his own

business."[46]

Both Preston and Stuart linked reputation to the ability to depend on a man to keep his promises. Failure or inability to pay one's debts represented a breach of promise. Preston affirmed John Robinson's personal integrity by noting that his "word may be depended on"; he saved his reputation by loaning him money. Stuart's determination to use his lands even to "ye last acre" to pay his debts demonstrated both a sense of personal integrity and an attempt to preserve his reputation. The experience of Preston's friend, client, and fellow Botetourt County justice George Skillern revealed the mental distress that could result when personal integrity was called into question.

Like Preston, Skillern had emigrated from Ulster as a child. His family landed at Philadelphia and made their way south to the Virginia backcountry. When Skillern's father died in 1744, he included James Patton among his executors. In the late 1750s and early 1760s, Skillern served as deputy sheriff to Preston and to Patton's son-in-law John Buchanan. In 1770 he found himself facing a lawsuit before the General Court in Williamsburg which threatened to destroy his "character."[47]

The exact nature of Skillern's suit remains undetermined, but clearly he expected the information circulated as a result of it to destroy his reputation.

Possibly he had become a victim of the scheme by John Madison, Jr., son of the Augusta County court clerk, and his partners to caveat all the unpatented land in Augusta County. Land speculators often failed to complete the final stage of the patenting process because of the fees it entailed and because after a patent was issued the law required them to pay annual quitrents on the land. Caveat offered one of several legal procedures that allowed others to dispute the original claim and gain control of the lands for themselves. Madison initiated a number of suits against Preston, among others, but the latter used his Williamsburg connections to forestall Madison's maneuver. Skillern may have proved less fortunate or may have gotten caught assisting in Preston's manipulation of the law. In any event the threat that he would be publicly exposed as unethical or untrustworthy left Skillern "Hart Broaken." He lamented to Preston that "ye Lord send that you Nor None of your family may Ever Bear ye uneasiness of mind I Now under Goe Both Sleep & awake & ye thoughts of Loosing my Carractor which is Now at Stake to the Last Degree is Never out of my mind Nor is Anney thing a Comfort to me on this Earth."[48]

Skillern's fears of public humiliation in Williamsburg proved ungrounded. Nevertheless, Madison probably did succeed in causing him some local embarrassment two years later when he complained to the Botetourt County court that Skillern had threatened his life. The court ordered

Skillern and two securities to give bond for the former's "good behavior for twelve months and one day . . . to all his Majesty's liege people, especially towards John Madison."[49]

In spite of occasional setbacks the ambitious ideals of their fathers generally served the second generation well. They improved their fortunes through hard work combined with a keen eye for opportunity. They advanced their political power and prestige through public service. More than James Patton or Israel Christian, Fleming and the members of the second generation revealed a sense of noblesse oblige. The Latin inscription on the cover of William Preston's memorandum book best summed up the work ethic of the second generation: "Hic Labor hoc Onus Est, magnamen Honori, manganimous Labor, Hic omnia Labor vencit improbus." Roughly translated, it reads, "Here work is burdensome, great honor, high-minded work, this work conquers all inferior things."[50]

The work of the elite included the government and defense of the Virginia frontier. Most members of the second generation began their public careers as militia officers during the Seven Years' War. During Dunmore's War Fleming and Christian both participated in the Point Pleasant Expedition led by Andrew Lewis. Preston, county lieutenant for Fincastle County, oversaw local defense. During the revolution both Preston and Fleming served as

county lieutenants, the highest office in the militia. Christian first held a position as lieutenant colonel in the First Virginia regiment and later as a colonel in the Botetourt County milita.[51]

The careers of the second generation as civilian officials proved no less distinguished. By 1765 the Augusta County court included Preston, Robinson, and Skillern, as well as Andrew Lewis and his brother Charles. The original commission of the peace for Botetourt County, erected from part of Augusta in 1769, listed Preston, Robinson, Skillern, and Andrew Lewis among the justices. William Christian and his brother-in-law Stephen Trigg were added to the court in 1770. Thomas Lewis and William Preston held the lucrative posts of county surveyor for Augusta and Botetourt counties, respectively. Charles and Andrew Lewis, Preston, Christian, and Trigg all served in the House of Burgesses before the revolution. Skillern and Stuart served as delegates, revolutionary and post-revolutionary successors to the burgesses, for one term each during the war.[52]

The backcountry elite supported the patriot cause almost to a man. Andrew Lewis, William Christian, and Stephen Trigg represented Botetourt and Fincastle (created from part of Botetourt in 1772) counties at the five Virginia Conventions held to coordinate the colony's resistance to British imperial policies. Preston, Christian, Trigg, and Fleming all served on the respective

local committees of safety for their counties. In their roles as high ranking militia officers, the elite also directed most of the fighting in the backcountry.[53]

As was the case for the emigrant generation, political and economic success went hand in hand for the second generation. Its members continued to speculate in backcountry lands, both in Virginia and later in Kentucky. Positions as county surveyors facilitated access to choice lands, since these officials exercised considerable authority in deciding what lands to survey for whom, how the boundaries would run, and when to undertake the survey. In 1783 James Neville asked William Preston, who by that date served as surveyor for Montgomery County (which included most of Kentucky), to see his warrant "laid out on any small piece of Land that is good." Preston's brother-in-law, the Manchester merchant Edward Johnson, thanked him in 1779 for "speaking to Mr. Floyd [Preston's assistant in Kentucky] to secure me some land in Kentucky. . . I know [he] will do the best for me." [54]

Although kin groups often cooperated in speculative ventures, any threat to the system itself could insure the cooperation of former rivals. Although William Preston and William Christian had competed for the office of surveyor of Botetourt County in the late 1760s, in 1774 they joined forces in an attempt to insure that the terms concerning the king's bounty lands promised in the 1750s were interpreted

in the manner most favorable to them. A desire to secure their own western land claims probably contributed to the backcountry elite's overwhelming support of the revolutionary cause. In 1775 William Peachy of Richmond County wrote to Preston that he had "heard something of the Governrs refusing to Grant any more warrants to the Provincials & that it was thought the present faithless and venal Ministry would endeavour to make void those that had already been granted. I hope it is not so, for if they take it in head, according to their usual Mode of Conduct, especially in regard to America they are capable of anything that promises to make for their own Advantage or purposes. I thank you for the Hint of pushing this Matter early to the Governr and shall endeavour to profit therefrom."[55]

In spite of the continuing importance of land speculation in amassing wealth, the second generation did not wholly abandon its mercantile origins. Its members participated in the cattle trade and in supplying goods to troops during the Seven Years' War. A few imported servants to the backcountry during the 1770s. William Preston engaged in a variety of mercantile activities over the course of his career. In 1756 he sold small articles--silk and cambrick handkerchiefs, garters, stockings, Bristol-handles knives, knee buckles, shirts, brass shoe buckles, and shoes--to the men in his militia company. In 1759 he purchased sixteen slaves from a ship in Maryland, presumably

at least some of them for resale. He paid the College of William and Mary for two peddlars licenses in 1765. In the 1770s he acted as agent for and sometime partner with his Scottish merchant brother-in-law Edward Johnson, who organized one of the ill-fated servant importation ventures.[56]

Much more than their fathers, the second generation turned their interest to agriculture. They invested heavily (for their region) in slaves, although mixed farming, not tobacco, predominated in the region. Hemp became the principal cash crop in the 1760s and 1770s, but wheat assumed a superior position after the revolution. Immediately preceding and during the war flax production and linen weaving grew in popularity. William Preston relied on overseers and tenants to supervise agricultural activities on his various properties; many of his contemporaries probably did the same. Fleming relied heavily on his wife to supervise Belmont while he was away from home in the 1770s and 1780s. Preston's widowed sister Letitia Breckinridge sometimes oversaw specific tasks for her brother at his Greenfield farm, which was near her home, after he moved fifty miles west to Smithfield in 1772.[57]

Members of the second generation adopted their fathers' strong sense of familial values as well as their drive for economic success. Producing, rearing, and passing on one's wealth and heritage to one's children proved important

components in the development of a man's self-esteem and his reputation among his peers. Familial success included sexual prowess, marriage to a suitable wife, paternity, and fatherhood--especially the education of one's progeny.

Once again, the letters of David Robinson offer the keenest insights into the values of the young men of the second generation. The light tone adopted by Robinson in discussing courtship, sexual prowess, and paternity should not belie the importance that backcountry men ascribed to these activities. Dancing proved central to the rituals of courtship in eighteenth-century Virginia, and in 1759 Robinson chided thirty-year old William Preston about his recently commenced dancing lessons. "What a wonderful sympathy is there between Fops, Fools, Fidlers & Dancers." Robinson compared himself, "a Philosopher," with Preston, "a Dancer." "Whilst I am examining the Comet's Orbit & endeavouring to discover whether it has passed its Perihellion and by approaching its decending Node or whither we are yet in Danger, you (honest man) no Doubt, are trying with equal Anxiety whither you can kiss a Girl Sixty Times a Minute A Glorious Enterprize indeed! . . . Whilst I am enquiring into the Nature of Good & Evil and what true Happiness consists in, you, very likely, are studiously learning how to perform the LAVOON and CUPEE."[58]

Robinson also acknowledged the importance of sexual prowess in defining a young man's self-esteem and

establishing his reputation. "'Tis a Maxim with you," he continued in his letter to Preston, "that Nothing in Life is pleasing but Love . . . The Posey of Your Ring is TO LIVE IS TO LOVE. I have Known you in the silent watches of the Night [to] slip out of Your Bed as by some Secret Impulse and repair to a Certain Corner where I cou'd easily discover you by a Kind of Inarticulate Noise. T wou'd be too tedious to tell you the Story of the Girl you surprised Once in a Chest, and your ingenious Conduct on that Occassion . . . You have made yourself acquaint[ed] with every young woman's Face and Leg in the County & know well how to appear Agreeable and now intend to take a Tour first to PHILADELPHIA AND THEN TO THE Eastern Shores in Order to inlarge your SPHERE OF KNOWLEDGE."[59]

In 1761 thirty-two-year-old Preston married Susannah Smith, daughter of a prosperous Hanover County carpenter, tavern keeper, and farmer. In the same year Robinson travelled to New England on business, where his ship ran aground in a hurricane in the sound between Martha's Vineyard and the mainland. In a letter to Preston describing the shipwreck, Robinson could not resist adding a note about the sexual exploits of one Colonel McNutt, "late of Virginia." "For News, I refer you to the inclosed Prints, where you will find a Paragraph concerning Colo. McNutt . . . soon expected to be gov. of Nova Scotia . . . it may not be amiss too, to acquaint you that the Colo Last

Year, in the Highth of his Gaiety, performed Two other Exploits in N. England which I leave you to guess. You may be assured however that he has given sufficient Proof of his MANHOOD in them both." In tacit acknowledgment of Preston's marriage, Robinson closed by diplomatically noting, "I shall not say One Word about W_m_n, as it wou'd now a Days be very impertinent."[60]

Proof of one's manhood, i.e. paternity, became even more important for sustaining one's reputation after marriage. Edward Johnson and the younger sister of Susanna Preston had been married for some time when he wrote to his brother-in-law in 1773 that "Betsey has not fattened, however I think to find some feasible story at least as an excuse by the time you come down." A year later he noted that should the colonies go to war against Britain and "no goods . . . be shipt me, . . . I believe I will come up & stay a month or two with you & learn surveying farming, &c. and perhaps get a lesson in Multiplication from you as Betsy keeps very thin." At the time Susanna and William Preston had eight children. In 1775, Betsy Johnson successfully gave birth to a daughter and her husband reflected on the fact in a letter to his brother-in-law. "I thank you for the participation of my Joy on the safe delivery of my Dear little Girl, no Circumstance of my life ever gave me half the pleasure as the happy time my wife had & the agreeable present she made me of a very fine Girl."[61]

In 1778 Johnson wrote to Preston about the impending birth of his third child. "I have just sent for the old woman and hope by tomorrow to have another boy added to my little family, my wife is as well as common in her situation & the children quite hearty." In a post script Johnson boasted," I have the happiness to inform that mother midnight has done her business & we have another fine boy, the largest & prettiest baby the Granny has seen these 12 months, it is not more than four hours since the old woman was sent for, the Child is drest, the mother had her Caudle & composed & I hope will do well, but I doubt she'll not keep her determination of not having any more, I think we have done pretty well this is the third in 31 months if we continue & have Males I shall expect a premium from the state." In the following year Johnson congratulated Preston on the "addition of a little Stranger" in his own household; Susanna Preston had given birth to a daughter a month earlier. Johnson also noted the "addition of a fine Girl (Henrietta) to our fam[il]y." [62]

The ability to father children contributed both to a man's self-esteem and to his reputation, but fatherhood consisted of more than paternity. Elite fathers accepted the responsibility of passing on a cultural as well as a material legacy to their children. Books and education constituted an essential part of this cultural legacy. In 1766, five years after William Preston's marriage,

bookseller James Adams congratulated him on the increase of his family and sent him "a couple of spelling Books, two primers, two Catechisms, [a] Life of David &c for the Children." At the time the Prestons had a four-year old daughter and two sons, aged two and one. Preston's youngest daughter, Letitia Preston Floyd, remembered long after her father's death that he and "Col. Thomas Lewis . . . Gen. Andrew Lewis . . . Mr. John Madison, and Col. [William] Fleming" engaged Gabriel Jones, "an Englishman" and a prominent Valley attorney, to select and purchase libraries for them in London. Jones chose classics, ancient history, and "distinguished poets of England" as well as other works. Floyd observed that "the use of these books gave to each family possessing them a station that out ranked very many wealthier families."[63]

Floyd also recalled that her father required every young man "who was employed in his office [surveyor] to teach school six months at least, thereby finding out his temper, diligence, habits and trust-worthiness." When John Floyd, her husband's father, kept school for Preston his pupils included not only the Preston children but also their Smith and Breckinridge cousins, the children of Preston's sisters. Preston's will ordered that John Breckinridge, who served as one of his uncle's assistant surveyors in the early 1780s, "be paid for the time he taught school at my house." Betsy Fleming, daughter of Anne and William, also

lived and studied with her cousins, the children of Anne and William Christian, under a tutor at the Christian's house.[64]

The concern of elite fathers for the proper education of their sons did not end with hiring private tutors. In the late 1760s and 1770s Preston's brother-in-law the Reverend John Brown, a graduate of Princeton, supervised an academy outside of Lexington. James and John Breckinridge and Brown's own sons James and John studied there. Preston and William Christian both served on the board of visitors of the school after it became Liberty Hall Academy in 1776, and Preston and his merchant brother-in-law Edward Johnson helped procure books for it. In the late 1770s Preston asked Johnson about the suitability of the academy at Hanover for his sons John and Francis and his nephew John Breckinridge. Johnson replied that he had "not been able to learn the Character of the school," but understood that "some Gentlemen that were visitors of the College of W & M have [been] permitted to Examine the Schollars & publish to the public their opinion of the proficiency they have made, as I have Never seen it published I presume it is still undone." By 1780 Preston still had not decided where to send his sons. The brother of Preston's wife advised him that "I am unable to give him [Preston's son John] my Opinion at this time respecting the Academy in Hanover, as I know very little of its Regulations having spent but a short

Time this two or three Years in these Parts."[65]

Membership in Virginia's western elite did not necessarily predispose one to long life. William Christian, Stephen Trigg, William Preston, and the husband of Preston's sister, Robert Breckinridge all died relatively young. Breckinridge fell ill and died in 1773. In 1783 fifty-three year old Preston had a stroke at a militia muster in Montgomery County and died shortly thereafter. Trigg and his forty-three year old brother-in-law Christian were killed by Indians in Kentucky in 1782 and 1786, respectively. None left children above the age of twenty-one at the time of their deaths, but all provided amply for their children.[66]

The material legacies of the third generation differed little from those that their fathers had received, except that they included more of the trappings of gentility and, of course, devises of land were no longer entailed. Instead men of the second generation tried to perpetuate interdependence among various family members and thereby to bind their families together after their own deaths. They gave their widows considerable latitude regarding the eventual distribution of the estate, but sought to keep slaves and livestock together in a common fund for as long as possible. Widows and elder sons held joint authority over the management of property and the education of younger children.[67]

Perhaps because of the youth of the children left behind, these fathers expressed an inordinate concern for the educations of their children. Robert Breckinridge asked that his executors "put out to Interest [money from the sale of land] for the Use of my said son John or apply it towards giving him a learned Education, as they may judge most to his advantage." William Christian left the profits of "Saltsburg" for the first seven years after his death "for the maintaining supporting cloathing and educating [of] my family," and only thereafter to his son John. William Preston left the clearest instructions for educating his children. He gave the "use & profits of all my plantations, slaves & stock of every kind" to his wife "for the decent & comfortable support of herself & my children & also for their education in which it is my will that no reasonable expence may be spared Especially for my sons where there capacities will admit of it . . . My intention is as near as I can judge to put all my sons on an equal footing in regard to what they shall enjoy out of my estate, as also their education--But should any of them be neglectful about their education or be deficient in point of genius after a proper trial made, it is my Will that such son or sons be bound to some genteel trade or calling till they come of age, that they may know how to make a living by this labour." Finally, Preston devised "the Horse shoe bottom" to his sons John and Francis on condition that "they settle at the Horse

shoe bottom during the life of their Mother & take care of the education of my other sons."[68]

The men of the second generation internalized the work ethic and ambitions of their fathers, although they occasionally disavowed such values when failure threatened. In spite of their early deaths, most surpassed the economic and political achievements of their fathers. They combined farming and land speculation with careers as civil and military officials. They espoused a view of masculinity that linked reputation with trustworthy behavior, especially keeping one's word and avoiding financial embarrassment.[69] At the same time that they acknowledged the responsibilities of the governing to the governed, however, they perceived little difference between their own private interests and those of the state. The men of the second generation, like their fathers, tried to pass on both their status and their values to their children. William Preston and his brother-in-law Robert Breckinridge succeeded remarkably well.[70]

The Third Generation

The elder sons of Breckinridge and Preston zealously pursued their own educations after their fathers' deaths and took seriously their responsibilities to advise and assist younger brothers. The Breckinridge and Preston cousins, along with the sons of William's sisters Margaret Brown and

Mary Howard, maintained a strong group identity as young men. Their ambitions rivalled those of their fathers, and their accomplishments often surpassed them.

Between 1783 and 1788 no fewer than a half-dozen Prestons, Breckinridges, and Browns studied law with George Wythe at the College of William and Mary. Some struggled in that economically distressed decade to find enough cash to pay for their educations. In June 1783, shortly before his death, William Preston wrote to his sister Lettice Breckinridge that he could not "command a single dollar to supply" her son John. Preston had, nevertheless, "fallen on a method to get him a supply [of money] that will answer his purpose." The following year Francis Preston wrote to his brother John that he had discharged all his college debts but "Jamey Brown being here and I believe without money & thinking it my duty as a relation to assist him and on consequence of that [I] must draw more then I should have wanted for myself."[71]

This sense of familial duty and interdependence extended beyond finances to reputation. In 1787 James Brown, who was at William and Mary, wrote to James Breckinridge, who had not yet returned to college, that Mr. Wythe had complimented "the six or seven young men from beyond the mountains" whom he had taught on their abilities. Brown added, "I found that four cousins, a Brother, and Myself made six of the number--If you see Frank [Preston] I

hope you give him a taste of a Compliment which reflects honor not only on our Country but also on our family."[72]

Because they perceived their reputations as intertwined, cousins and brothers took a proprietary interest in one another. In February 1787 James Brown's brother John, who had already finished his legal studies and moved to Kentucky, wrote to his cousin James Breckinridge at William and Mary. "My Brother James informs me that he is comfortably situated in College--Pray write me how he conducts himself--studies, speaks, everything else which you think I would want to know respecting him. The greatness of my affection for him makes me the more anxious for his future Character & figure in Life." At the end of the year Brown admonished both his brother and cousin that "You have it in your power to make yourselves respected & your opportunities for Improvement are not surpassed by any upon the continent."[73]

The correspondence between James Breckinridge and his brother John, who had preceded him at William and Mary by several years, included advice on the study of law as well as personal encouragement. The brothers discussed the difficulty of Blackstone and the relative merits of reading reporters. As James neared the end of his legal studies, John wrote, "look inwardly, & consider your own foundation & Talents . . . If you mean to pursue the Law for a future support; if you prefer it through choice to any other, &

think that nature designed your Talents for it; you need not only hope for Success in the Study of it, but rest satisfyed that Success is ensured to you." He recalled his own days as a student and "The Hope, the Ambition, the Desire to please & excell that ruled my Mind by turns, I almost feel at this length of time." Cousin Francis Preston earlier advised James to "consecrate every moment of the time you have towards your improvement & don't for a few obstacles which will at first appear, dispond, but boldly go on & in the end you will be fully & amply rewarded for all your trouble & pain."[74]

Francis and John Preston carried out their father's charge to oversee the educations of their younger brothers. In 1786 John secured a schoolmaster to teach all his siblings as well as other children in the neighborhood. In the Fall twelve-year-old James Patton Preston continued his studies at the Botetourt Academy. A few years later he attended school in Richmond while residing with his cousin John Breckinridge. Their youngest brother Thomas Lewis Preston studied at the Washington Academy in Lexington. Both brothers eventually attended William and Mary, where Thomas studied law with St. George Tucker. In 1801 he wrote to his brother John that he "most cordially" wished him to "always give me your advice unreservedly when I stand in need of it."[75]

The cousins continued to support and encourage each

other. In 1800 James Breckinridge loaned his cousin Thomas Preston "one of the Volumes [of the British Theatre] in which The mistakes of a night or She stoops to conquer is contained" for a performance by "the Students of Washington Academy." Three years earlier Benjamin Howard, son of the youngest of William Preston's sisters, wrote from William and Mary where he was studying law to his cousin James Breckinridge, who also served as one of the trustees of his father's estate. "[I] am in hopes that by an improvement of those golden oppertunities which are presented to me here; I shall reap such advantages that my coming here instead of affording a cause for future regret may be enumerated among the most important and happy events of my life."[76]

The young men of the third generation believed that economic rewards naturally followed hard work; consequently, they saw their educations as means to an end. The encouragement and advice that brothers and cousins offered each other bolstered confidence and reinforced the determination to succeed. Their individual successes contributed not only to their own reputations but also increased the prestige of the entire family. The third generation's high expectations for themselves generally were not disappointed. Their educations prepared them to take advantage of post-Revolutionary economic opportunities and helped them establish the connections that enabled them to benefit from newly created political opportunities at both

the state and national levels.

Like their fathers, the men of the third generation began their careers in public service as local militia officers. The eldest among them--John Preston, John Brown, and James Breckinridge and his brother William--fought for the patriot cause during the revolution. In 1788 John Preston planned to lead an expedition from Montgomery County to fight the Creek Indians in Georgia in exchange for "bounties in lands & cash." His brother William held a commission in the United States Army for six years. He fought at the Battle of Fallen Timbers and in the 1790s patrolled the Cherokee country along the Tennessee and Holston Rivers in an attempt to prevent squatters from settling there. Most members of the western Virginia elite continued to hold commissions for high offices in the militia throughout their lives. Several participated in the defense of the United States in 1812. As he prepared to enter the field in that year Francis Preston asked his cousin James Breckinridge to procure for him "A handsome Marque (you know my rank) 1 camp Bed, 4 folding chairs & one Table, A pair of Mess Boxes, suitable for my grade, say to contain 6 Dishes 24 plates 6 large & 6 small Goblets, 1 pr. screwed Candle sticks & snuffers, 12 Knives & forks, 6 cups & saucers, Coffee & teapot, ten boxes of different sizes to contain coffee & tea & spices &c ten or [twelve] brass camp Kettles &c &c." The request demonstrated the significance

that the material trappings of gentility had assumed even for officers in the field.[77]

The political aspirations and achievements the men of the third generation equalled and often exceeded those of their fathers. While still a student at William and Mary John Breckinridge represented Botetourt County in the Virginia House of Delegates. Of the thirteen Preston, Breckinridge, Brown, and Howard cousins, eight served as representatives in the lower houses of assembly of Virginia or Kentucky, and three became state senators in their respective states. Four were elected to the House of Representatives of the United States and three served in the United States Senate.[78]

In addition to serving as representatives in state and national legislatures, the cousins held a number of additional important offices. John Preston became treasurer of Virginia in 1810 and held the post for nine years. His brother James Patton Preston served three terms as governor of Virginia beginning in 1816. James Breckinridge lost his bid for the governorship in 1799 but remained the leader of the Federalist Party in Virginia. James Brown became Secretary of State for Kentucky in 1792 and later served as Secretary of the Territory of New Orleans. In 1823 President Monroe appointed him minister to France, a position he held until the end of the administration of John Quincy Adams. Between 1810 and 1813 Benjamin Howard served

as governor of the Territory of Missouri.[79]

John Breckinridge and John Brown became the most significant political figures among the third generation. Breckinridge introduced the Kentucky Resolutions in that state's House of Representatives and later served as its speaker. He became attorney general of Kentucky and eventually represented the state in the U.S. Senate. At the time of his death in 1806 he held the post of Attorney General of the United States in Thomas Jefferson's administration. Brown represented the Kentucky counties in the Confederation Congress and served as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1788. As a member of the Virginia Convention later that year, however, he voted against ratification. He served as a U.S. Senator from Kentucky between 1792 and 1805 and acted as president pro tempore of the Senate in 1803-1804.[80]

As had been true for preceding generations, political and economic success came simultaneously to members of the third generation. They continued to participate in some economic activities that had proved profitable to their fathers, most notably land speculation, plantation agriculture, and tenant farming. But the third generation also expanded its economic interests to take advantage of new opportunities in the law and in industry. James Breckinridge and Francis Preston both owned ironworks in the late 1790s and early 1800s. William Preston established a

naillery in 1798, and Francis Preston's marriage brought him a saltworks. John Preston owned an interest in a gold mine, and John Brown helped to found the Kentucky Manufacturing Society.[81]

Nearly all of the members of the western elite who had legal educations practiced law at least for a time. Francis Preston's daughter remembered after her father's death that "He quit the practice of the law on his Marriage with My Mother, who was a wealthy heiress." Even those who like Preston, "quit the practice of law" could continue to reap benefits from their legal knowledge in other areas of economic endeavour, especially land speculation. In 1786 lawyer John Breckinridge advised his brother James, who had not yet completed his own legal education, regarding their speculative activities in Kentucky. "Kentuckey is the greatest field for Speculation I believe in the world: Tho I am satisfyed there never existed so many Ideal fortunes any where. The whole Mystery in amassing there, seems to be this only; Do not grasp at too much--secure what you do aim at, and never warrant titles; if you even think your title the best in the Country if you grant it away; have this Clause, "the title to which Land I do by no means bind myself, my Heirs exrs, adms. [word illegible] to warrant or defend. Breckinridge's reasons for refusing to warrant titles included a fear that "Kentucky will very soon be established into an independant State [and] . . . will at

first be very lame [in] the Administration of Justice. . . . [and] the Barrier between law and equity . . . overlapped." He believed that the confusion in land claims would prove so great that the judges (in equity?) "there very soon will be uncontroulable in their judicial Capacity."[82]

Unlike their fathers and grandfathers, members of the third generation perceived a more pronounced difference between their own private interest and the public good, although they often maintained that the two interests coincided. In a letter to his cousin James Breckinridge in 1790, James Brown noted that "A few days ago I received a letter from John Brown. The Highest prospects of National Happiness under the new Government, a rapid rise of Public Credit--United States securities had risen in value from five to ten shillings in the Pound within the short space of two months. Everything then wore a pleasing Aspect." At other times the coincidence of public and private interest appeared less certain. William Preston wrote to James Breckinridge in 1812 asking him to "serve me if it can be done consistant with your own ideas of propriety taking in view of the national interest at the same time." Preston wanted Breckinridge to help him gain an appointment as commander of the Louisiana and Illinois stations as "it would compot with my future views and would enable me while rendering services to our country to lay the foundations of a future fortune for my children." Preston also thought "it

would be exceedingly agreeable to [their cousin Benjamin] Howard to have me placed there as he very often stands in need of council on military matters." Preston did not get the appointment.[83]

Not every member of the western elite proved equally capable of achieving economic success. The careers of John Preston and William Breckinridge illustrate the effects of economic failure and the public disgrace that accompanied it on members of the third generation. Preston's fall came at the end of a long and successful career. In contrast, success eluded Breckinridge for most of his life. Unlike his brothers John and James, William never mastered the skills required to retain and improve his fortune.

When he became treasurer of the commonwealth of Virginia at the age of forty-four, John Preston already had enjoyed a successful career as a planter and public servant. Upon assuming his new post, he set out to apply the same combination of vision and hard work that had previously served him so well. In 1809 he wrote to his brother William that "money is as powerful a weapon well directed as the sword, & does not require half the strength to use it, but double the skill." Preston found the Bank of Virginia "has not been managed in that Spirit in which it was created, I am determined & have actually set about it & have no doubt but I shall succeed in giving it a perfect Republican Impulse. When this is the case it will by no means be a

machine which operates unfairly or unequally. It will then render perfect satisfaction & be agreeable to all."[84]

When Preston retired ten years later all did not "render perfect satisfaction." An audit of the commonwealth's accounts found them in arrears, and in 1821 Preston lost a case in the General Court, which held him and his securities liable for $87,587. The legislature passed three acts for the relief of the securities, which included Preston's brothers Francis and James Patton, and the former treasurer transferred his property to trustees to be sold to raise funds to repay the treasury. A letter from his wife Eliza Ann Preston to her brother-in-law Francis conveyed the sense of familial and personal anguish, embarrassment, and shame that resulted from John Preston's failure. "We thought of going to Kentucky to make a little settlement . . . All our family are very anxious to leave this country, as they could be more tranquil any where else--I often compare myself to a drowning man who is catching at anything, and everything, that offers the smallest gleam of hope by which he may be saved, all breaking he sinks at last . . . . My heart bleeds at every pore over everyone involved in this overwhelming misfortune, my health is bad, spirits sunk, and I have the most awful apprehension of the effects it will have ultimately on my dear suffering Husband."[85]

Unlike John Preston, William Breckinridge demonstrated

a lack of business acumen early in his career. In 1782 he sold the two slaves bequeathed him by his father to his mother for 1,000 acres of Kentucky land. In 1784 he went there to seek his fortune as a speculator. Apparently Breckinridge made a bad bargain and possibly broke a contract. In 1786 Moses Haven, a family friend, wrote to William's brother John that "Billey is returned home like the prodigal in Holy Writ his penetance is excepted. . . . I was glad to see him in his mother's House again as it give the greatest uneasiness to hear of his distrest situation abroad he will now have time & leisure to reflect on the impropriety of his conduct and humble [sic] hope will will [sic] not perserve[re] in a Cause so productive of uneasiness to his friends as well as of innevitable ruin to himself: how happy an event that he has neither wife nor Child to fall with him nor share in this Distress his imprudence brings on him."[86]

Time and reflection did not transform Billy. In 1788 his brother James encountered him in Williamsburg without "money sufficient to pay off his tavern account . . . [and] was obliged to assume the payment." In 1789 John and William sold a tract of land; their father and uncle had left the profits of it to William to purchase a farm. The three brothers appear to have invested the proceeds jointly in Kentucky lands; James retained control of the investment. William spent the years between 1792 and 1796 working as a

deputy clerk for David May, clerk of Botetourt County. James noted wryly, "I do not know what contract he has made with May but I am fearful not much better than those he has been making and breaking all his life." When their mother moved to Kentucky in 1792, she admonished her son John to remember that "I depend uppon your goodness that you will take care of your Poor Brother Billy and I request you will have a Tender [hold?] over him and not let him want the comon necessities."[87]

As his brothers' fortunes improved, William's economic situation remained stagnant or declined. He lashed out at them in letters to his mother. "I expected from what my Brother John told me before he left . . . that he would try to do some thing for me in Kentuckey after he got there but find the Contrary. . . . I am determined then from this time forth never [to] ask a favour of any relation on earth while I have the use of my hands or a speck of reason remains within me." When John informed his brother that no vacancies existed in clerks' offices in Kentucky and advised him to stay in Virginia unless he intended to "turn to the farming Business, William told their mother, "then he says in a low voice we will try to do something for you in that way as if it were the last resource [resort?]."[88]

William reserved his most venomous criticism for his brother James. He noted concerning their joint business venture that "besides having all the property in his own

hands he also sold the Lands that he was to let me have for my property and now Enjoys the profits and advantages arising there from that Estate and now behold if I happen to say anything about it he will tell me that it was all owing to the bad bargain that I made and I must abide by the Consequences--I think ten or eleven years for a person to be unjustly cruely and eniquitously . . . kept out of their property" is enough. "It vexes me to think that such a man as Watts [the purchaser] [is] now living on and enjoying the fruits of My fathers Labour and his own heirs ought to have enjoyed it if the Land had been kept in the famely I should still have thought as hard of it . . . I suppose that there is at this time as fine Corn and Tobacco on it as any Land in Kentuckey or in any of the United States." William periodically threatened to sue James for the recovery of the land.[89]

Throughout the 1790s William struggled to maintain his self-esteem. In 1794 he told his mother that "You must know that I have made use of so much Industry that I have got myself into such Repute that I can get myself to Business any where in this county." Yet he added, "I am not ambitious. If I can get a Sufficiency for Life that is all I want." The following year he wrote that he hoped through industry to avoid becoming "Troublesome" to his friends. From time to time he expressed his intentions to join his mother in Kentucky and repeatedly inquired whether she "ever

intend[ed] Taking up house Keeping again or not." She never did. In his last letter to her in 1796, William noted, "I am still trying to make a Living tho it is small."[90]

William Breckinridge eventually moved to Kentucky and settled on a tract of land provided for him by his brother John. Although he married and had several children, he never held public office nor became financially successful. He never stopped trying, however. In 1820 he asked his brother James to secure him a share of 3200 acres of land in Bourbon County patented in their mother's name.[91]

The psychological burdens of failure probably weighed heavier on the third generation than on their fathers because they had more to lose, especially in the form of intangible qualities like status and reputation. When economic failures shamed them, both Preston's family and Breckinridge longed to run away. Eliza Ann Preston and her family yearned to move to Kentucky. William Breckinridge tried to run away from a value system whose demands he could not meet. When hard work failed to bring rewards, William declared, "I am not ambitious." Like David Robinson, he (at least momentarily) questioned the work ethic that had served others of his generation so well.

Just as they had supported and encouraged one another in striving for success, family members came to the aid of those who fell victim to financial misfortune. Both Preston's and Breckinridge's families offered economic

assistance. Preston's brothers stood security for him, and later his siblings purchased several of his slaves. Breckinridge's brother gave him a tract of land on which to live. The intertwined reputations of individual and family compelled the rest of the family to aid distressed members. As William Breckinridge demonstrated, however, the beneficiaries of familial charity sometimes resented becoming objects of pity to those who by virtue of birth remained their equals.

Given the significance that men of the third generation accorded the families into which they had been born, their preoccupation with the creation of new families of their own comes as no surprise. The third generations' definition of familial success resembled that of their fathers in that it included sexual prowess, a suitable marriage, the production of children, and the education of them. Men of the third generation openly discussed marrying for money and consciously weighed the financial status of potential brides when looking for mates. They also proved willing not only to acknowledge but also to provide economic support for the white illegitimate children that they fathered before their marriages.

As had been the case for their fathers, political and economic success preceded marriage for the men of the third generation. Thirteen Preston, Brown, Breckinridge, and Smith cousins married at an average age of thirty years.

When they finally turned their attention to marriage, however, these men calculatingly considered the economic assets of possible wives. In 1790 James Brown advised his cousin James Breckinridge that "Kentucky makes a respectable figure in Ladies--Miss Spear, a young Venus of the most adequate Beauty . . . has lately taken up her Residence among us. As you have always been a very womanish man I hope these Communications will have their Effect. Miss McDowell too! But John Preston can tell you how handsome she is --Pshaw! You will say--have they fortunes? Here I am silent and I am afraid that Beauty without wealth will have no Charms for you." A year later Thomas Walker informed Francis Preston that "our old friend Burnly is safely anchored in the Harbour of Matrimony with 6000L to comfort him." Affection and sexual attraction remained important considerations in the search for a wife, but economics also played a visible role as the men of the third generation struggled to maintain and increase their fortunes and their positions in society.[92]

Perhaps because they married comparatively late, men of the third generation did not practice celibacy before marriage. Francis and John Preston, James Breckinridge, and Benjamin Howard all fathered children out of wedlock. Breckinridge's reputation as a ladies' man, hinted at by Brown, appears to have been well-founded. John Preston noted in a letter to his brother Francis that "A Report

prevails in these parts that Jeamy Breckinridge fought a duel in Richmond with a certain Younghusband, but we have never certainly heard what the afront was on either side . . . . I hope he has come off with honor & convinced his adversary together with the rest of our lowland Gents that politeness blended with true courage can be found in a back woodsman."[93]

For the third generation, as for the second, the ability to father children became a more significant component of both reputation and self-esteem after marriage. Men boasted to each other about the pregnancies of their wives and the births of their children. John Preston captured the essence of their pride in a congratulatory letter to John Breckinridge. "It gives me real pleasure to hear that your dear [wife] will in a short time produce your image in miniature, I pray he may (for I had rather it would be a male) be the ornament of his country a credit to his relations & above all a par[t]icular favourite of Heaven." The child, the Breckinridge's first, actually proved to be a girl and was named Letitia Preston for her grandmother.[94]

A chief way in which fathers cared for their children, especially sons, remained the supervision of their educations. Members of the third generation sent both their sons and daughters away to school. Eliza Henry Preston and several of her sisters and cousins attended the Anne Smith Academy in Rockbridge County in 1809, shortly after it

opened. John Preston's sons went to schools in Richmond and later in Bath County, Virginia. The inculcation of acquisitive values came early for these young sons. In 1813 eleven-year-old Robert Breckinridge's penmanship exercises included eleven repetitions of the phrase "Money makes the Mare go." The exercise clearly revealed the extent to which fathers of the third generation tried to pass on the values --ambition, education, and hard work--that had served them so well.[95]

Unfortunately for their fathers, fourth-generation sons did not always accept these values. In 1819 schoolmaster Allen Taylor wrote to James Breckinridge that his son Robert, now age seventeen, "has . . . been diligent & I think is disposed to recover the years which he has spent in Idleness & folly. I think it would be Useful to write to him personally that you have received this report & express to him the pleasure which it gives you & the hope of his perseverance." The problems with Robert's brother James proved more serious. Francis Preston wrote to his cousin in 1821, "In relation to your prodigal son I pray God to assimilate his career to the one spoken of in the holy Book and none, no not one will participate more sincerely of the fatted calf than your real and unfeigned friend." Twenty-year old James had run away to Missouri. Two years later his uncle Robert Breckinridge rescued him in Kentucky in an "all but naked situation as to cloaths and in other respects

entirely destitute" and delivered him safely home.[96]

The men of the third generation extended the obligations of fatherhood to include their white illegitimate children as well as their legitimate offspring. In 1811 Francis Preston asked his cousin James Breckinridge, then in Washington, D.C., to forward a letter and $100 to Isaac Preston in Litchfield, Connecticut. He explained to James, "You will naturally enquire who this Isaac Preston is? I have only to answer with shame--that he is the growth of my wild oats or the fruits of my Youthful idleness--who I am now cultivating to usefulness as being the instrument of his existence, in hopes of making a kind of retribution to him for his unfortunate coming." Isaac Preston profitted from his father's "cultivation." In 1812 he graduated from Yale. He later studied law and became a judge on the Supreme Court of Louisiana in 1850.[97]

James Breckinridge also extended recognition and financial support to his own illegitimate child, Kitty, who was born in Kentucky around 1788. In Breckinridge's case, however, his Kentucky relatives may have prompted his involvement. In 1798 John Breckinridge "sent for & got from Mrs. Chambers her eldest daughter." John "found her much smaller & less forward than I expected. I intended to put her to a boarding school but she scarcly knew her letters, & I have her now at a very good english school within three miles of me, boarded at a decent House. . . . Let me know

what pains you wish to be taken with her & what kind of education you wish for her."[98]

Shortly after the brothers exchanged letters, Kitty moved in with John's family where she resided until 1804, when "Mrs. B[reckinri]dge was so dissatisfied with Kitty (having now grown too large to bear much control) . . . that she would not consent to keep her any longer." William, the brother of John and James, set off to deliver his reluctant sixteen-year-old niece to her mother. The pair stayed the "first night at Mr. Harts [and] Mrs. & Mr. Hart insisted on her to spend the winter there, where she now is." Kitty probably remained with Susanna Preston Hart, a cousin of the Breckinridges, until her own marriage in 1810. Elizabeth Meredith, sister of the Breckinridge brothers, and Susanna appear to have contrived the initial arrangement. In 1806 Susanna sent James a miniature "likeness of your daughter." She asked her cousin to provide Kitty with "such independent support as you consider proper for her gain [and] that . . . she so well deserves."[99]

In 1810 Kitty married William S. Waller, who had trained as a clerk and advanced to the position of Cashier of the Bank of Kentucky. James Breckinridge provided the couple with a "liberal" settlement. In spite of the fact that her father's Kentucky kin perceived Kitty as "smart & sensible," "genteel & likeable," and "an affectionate kind girl and one of the strictest morals and viracity," there is

no evidence that she ever saw or communicated directly with her father, nor he with her. In 1817 William Waller wrote to his father-in-law that Kitty "desires to be affectionately remembered to you. I have not been able to succeed in prevailing on her to write to you. her reluctance at writing seems to be a family trait."[100]

Duty motivated the men of the third generation reluctantly to extend the mantle of family to their white illegitimate children. Francis Preston and James Breckinridge provided sufficient financial support to permit Isaac Preston and Kitty Breckinridge Waller to derive some benefits from their fathers' elevated social status. Although Breckinridge certainly did not inform his wife of the existance of his illegitimate daughter and Preston probably did not tell his wife about his illegitimate son, both children received a degree of emotional support from their fathers' kin. Kitty proved more advantaged than Isaac in this respect, but in a society where women enjoyed considerably less independence than men, she may have needed the protection and intervention of kin more, especially female kin.

The ambitious values of their fathers and grandfathers served the men of the third generation well in their pursuit of wealth and political power. The most successful among them surpassed the accomplishments of the two preceding generations. Their inherited social and economic status

combined with ambition and hard work enabled them to profit from the opportunities generated by the American Revolution. They filled newly-created positions in state and national government, and many moved west where they seized chances for political and economic advancement. Yet to a greater degree than their ancestors, members of the post-Revolutionary generation recognized that their own interests and those of the larger public which they governed did not always coincide.

Their inherited social status and the success of their brothers probably increased the psychological pain of failure for men who did not succeed. The correspondence of the third generation provides a glimpse of the collective mentality of an established elite. The Preston, Breckinridge, Brown, and Howard cousins and brothers encouraged and supported one another. While they recognized each other's individual endeavors, however, they also acknowledged a shared identity and a common reputation. Kin accepted an obligation to care for those who suffered financial reverses and extended their support to the illegitimate children of male family members. Men of the third generation retained the desire of their fathers and grandfathers to create dynasties, but they also felt secure in their own elite status. Members of the Preston-Breckinridge-Brown-Howard clan had the acceptance of their peers, and they now possessed a respectable family pedigree

in Virginia.

The immigrant elite of western Virginia did not rise from rags to riches in three generations.[101] In comparison with most immigrants, James Patton, Israel Christian, William Fleming, and their elite counterparts arrived in Virginia advantaged by wealth and status. They brought with them a driving ambition, spawned by their experiences in the British commercial empire, to achieve the English ideal of elite status-- one based on wealth, possession of a landed estate, political power, education, and a distinguished family pedigree. These values proved remarkably enduring among their descendants in Virginia. Their sons and grandsons adapted them to a wide array of changing economic and political circumstances. With the coming of age of the third generation, the immigrants (especially those who had been blessed with sons and grandsons) had achieved what they set out to accomplish in Virginia.

NOTES

1. Francis Preston Memorandum Book, 1833, Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection, Filson Club, Louisville, Ky.

2. Ibid. and John Brown, Memorandum of the Preston Family, ca. 1837, Orlando Brown Papers, Filson Club.

3. For the usual portrait of backcountry culture see James G. Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish: A Social History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), pp. 256-272 and David Hackett Fischer, Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 605-782. Fischer notes the existance of what he calls a backcountry "ascendancy" but offers no explanation of how (or whether) the culture of these elite families differed from that the backcountry population generally, see pp. 642-650.

On elite culture in Virginia, cf. Bernard Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," in James Morton Smith, ed., Seventeenth-Century America: Essays in Colonial History (1959; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1972), pp. 90-115; Martin H. Quitt, "Immigrant Origins of the Virginia Gentry: A Study of Cultural Transmission and Innovation," William and Mary Quarterly (herafter cited as WMQ), 3rd ser., vol. 45 (1988): 629-655; and Jan Lewis, Pursuits of Happiness: Family and Values in Jefferson's Virginia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), chap. 4.

4. Beckett synthesizes an extensive secondary literature in The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), chaps. 1 and 2.

5. Ibid., quotation is from p. 43.

6. On Patton, Christian, and Fleming see Walter Lutwidge Letterbook, 1739-1740 (hereafter cited as Lutwidge Letterbook), Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle, England (microfilm, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library); Frederick Johnston, "Local History. Biographical Sketch of Israel Christian," Fincastle Herald, 18 June 1874, in Draper Collection 5 ZZ 104 (microfilm edition) State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Genealogy of William Fleming, William Fleming Papers (hereafter cited as Fleming Papers), Washington and Lee University Library, Lexington, Va. Others with commercial backgrounds included John Preston and the men of the Shelby family, see John Brown, Memorandum of the Preston Family, ca. 1837 and James Preston to William

Preston, 2 Feb. 1769, Preston Family Papers (Mss1P9267fFA2), Virginia Historical Society (hereafter cited as VHS), Richmond; and John Davies to Evan Shelby, 13 May 1787, Shelby Family Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as LC), Washington, D.C. On the commercial character of the Shenandoah Valley generally, see Robert D. Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977). On whether the status of elite immigrants was rising or falling, cf. Fischer, Albion's Seed, p. 642.

7. J.V. Beckett, Coal and Tobacco: The Lowthers and the Economic Development of West Cumberland, 1660-1760 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chap. 4 and Jacob Price, France and the Chesapeake: A History of the French Tobacco Monopoly, 1674-1791, and of Its Relationship to the British and American Tobacco Trades (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973), vol. 1, pp. 594-604.

8. Johnston, "Biographical Sketch of Israel Christian"; Edward Hughes, North Country Life in the Eighteenth Century (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), vol. 2, chap. 4; and Beckett, Coal and Tobacco, pp. 10, 171, and 202.

On the role of kinship in merchant families see Jacob Price, "One Family's Empire: the Russell-Lee-Clerk Connection in Maryland, Britain, and India, 1707-1857," Maryland Historical Magazine, 72 (1977): 165-225; and "Who Was John Norton? A Note on the Historical Character of Some Eighteenth-Century London Virginia Firms," WMQ, 3rd ser., 19 (1962): 400-407; and Bernard Bailyn, The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century (1955; reprint, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), pp. 35-36, 79-80, 87-91.

9. Beckett, Coal and Tobacco, chap. 1; Hughes, North Country Life, vol. 2, chap. 2; and Walter Lutwidge (hereafter cited as WL) to Archibald Hamilton, 10 Mar. 1739, Lutwidge Letterbook.

10. Hughes, North Country Life, vol. 2, chap. 2; Beckett, Coal and Tobacco, pp. 55, 60, 63, 66-68, and 112-115. Beckett maintains that merchants in Cumberland, England invested in land throughout their careers to give them a stable base. Thomas M. Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary American (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), p. 65 claims that active merchants in Philadelphia invested most of their resources in commercial ventures until near the end of their careers, when they began converting assets to urban real estate.

11. Beckett, Coal and Tobacco, pp. 204-205. Quotation is from WL to Robert Herries, 29 Dec. 1739, Lutwidge Letterbook. See also WL to Provost Johnson, 29 Dec. 1739, ibid.

12. Beckett, Coal and Tobacco, pp. 204-205 and Price, France and the Chesapeake, vol. 1, pp. 594-604.

13. On the significance of a merchant's reputation see WL to Bistain Moleworth, 10 Oct. 1739, Lutwidge Letterbook.

14. Patricia Givens Johnson, James Patton and the Appalachian Colonists (Verona, Va.: McClure Press, 1973), pp. 11-12. WL to Robert Herries, 7 Nov. and 29 Dec. 1739; WL to John Thompson and James Patton, 19 Nov. 1739; WL to James Johnson, 24 Dec. 1739; WL to [James Hamilton] and Provost Johnson, 29 Dec. 1739; all in Lutwidge Letterbook.

15. Quotations from WL to James Johnson, 24 Dec. 1739 and WL to Robert Herries, 29 Dec. 1739, ibid.

16. WL to Provost Johnson, 6 Jan. 1739/40; WL to James Patton, 10 Jan. and 3 Feb. 1739/40; WL to Robert Herries, 3 Feb. 1739/40; WL to Archibald Hamilton, 10 Mar. 1739/40 and 3 Apr. 1740; all in ibid.

17. WL to Provost Johnson, 6 Jan. 1739/40; WL to James Patton, 10 Jan. 1739/40; WL to Robert Herries, 29 Dec. 1739; WL to [James Hamilton] 29 Dec. 1739; all in ibid. Quotation is from WL to Archibald Hamilton, 10 Mar. 1739/40, ibid.

18. The voyage aboard the Walpole may not have been Patton's first to Virginia, see Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 Feb. 1843, typescript, Preston Family Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, microfilm. William Beverley to James Patton, 8 and 22 Aug. 1737, in Worthington C. Ford, ed., "Some Letters of William Beverley," WMQ, 1st ser., vol. 3 (1894): 226-227;

For the grant, see H.R. McIlwaine, ed. Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1930), 4:395. The grant was typical of other large grants in the 1720s and 1730s in requiring the grantees to settle one family per thousand acres on the land within a specified number of years before a patent would be given. As Beverley explained in his letter of 22 Aug. 1737, only the names of Edward Barradall and John Lewis appeared on the order in council. Barradall died in 1743.

19. McIlwaine, ed., Executive Journals of the Council 4:395; 5:82 and 173. Petition to Delegates of the Assembly of North Carolina from the executors of James Patton and John Buchanan [1782], Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS. Agreement between James Patton and the Company, 26 April 1749, ibid., box 1. See also Johnson, James Patton, chapters 6 and 7. On Virginia government and officials, see John M. Hemphill II and Gail S. Terry, "The Wheels of Government and the Machinery of Justice: The Workings of Virginia's Colonial Capital," Virginia Cavalcade 38 (1988): 56-57. The land office fell under the jurisdiction of the Secretary's Office.

20. Agreement between James Patton and the Company, 26 April 1749, Preston Family Papers, VHS; Petition to Delegates of the Assembly of North Carolina [1782], ibid.; and Johnson, James Patton, chapters 6 and 7. John Smith may also have assisted Patton in surveying the Company's lands. This was probably the same John Smith who emigrated from Ireland with his wife and children before 1740, see Joseph A. Waddell, Annals of Augusta County, Virginia, from 1726 to 1871, 2nd ed. (Bridgewater,Va.: C.J. Carrier Company, 1958; first published 1902), pp. 150-152. On procedures for purchasing land and on the social implications of the process, see Turk McCleskey, "Rich Land, Poor Prospects: Real Estate and the Formation of a Social Elite in Augusta County, Virginia, 1738-1770," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 98 (1990): 469-477.

21. Lyman Chalkley, Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, 1745-1800, reprint ed. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1974), 1:13; McIlwaine, ed. Executive Journals of the Council of Virginia, 5:191, 374-5, and 382; Chalkely, Chronicles, 3:439; and H.R. McIlwaine, ed. Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1752-1755, 1756-1758 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1909), 8 (1752-1755) n.3.

22. Thomas Lewis to William Preston, 7 Aug. 1782, as quoted in Sarah S. Hughes, Surveyors and Statesmen: Land Measuring in Colonial Virginia (Richmond: Virginia Surveyors Foundation, Ltd. and Virginia Association of Surveyors, Inc., 1979), p. 97.

23. On Patton's death see Virginia Gazette, 8 August 1755, p. 3, microfilm, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library and Johnson, James Patton, pp. 201-208. For Patton's property see Will of James Patton, 1 September 1750, Draper Collection, 1 QQ 63; Inventory of James Patton, 17 February 1758, Preston Family Papers (Mss1 P9267f FA2), box 1, VHS; and List of Bonds, Bills & Promissory Notes due

the Estate of James Patton, deceased, 17 February 1758, Preston Family Papers (MSS1 P9267a), VHS.

24. Will of James Patton, 1 September 1750, Draper Collection 1 QQ 63.

25. Will of James Patton, 1 September 1750, ibid. In 1767 Buchanan purchased sixteen slaves at a cost of £337.10.0 for his daughter Mary and annexed them to her lands on James River, Chalkley, Chronicles, 3: 458.

26. Waddell, Annals, p. 124; Johnston, "Biographical Sketch of Israel Christian," Fincastle Herald, 18 June 1874; William Preston and Israel Christian, Account for Sale of Servants, 4 September 1755, Preston Family Papers, box 1, VHS; Chalkley, Chronicles 2: 442, 447, and 459; Robert Douthat Stoner, A Seed-Bed of the Republic: A Study of the Pioneers in the Upper (Southern) Valley of Virginia (Roanoke, Virginia: Roanoke Valley Historical Society, 1962), pp. 285-286 and 433-434; Lewis Preston Summers, Annals of Southwest Virginia, 1769-1800 (Abingdon, Virginia, 1929), pp. 58-60 and 588; Lewis Preston Summers, History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786 (Richmond: J.L. Hill Printing Company, 1903), pp. 108-109; McIlwaine, ed. Journals of the House of Burgesses, vols. 9-10 (1758-1765). Christian, a Presbyterian, as were Patton and several other vestrymen, refused to take the test oath required of all officeholders in 1768 and resigned.

27. A search of McIlwaine, Executive Journals of the Council, vols. 4-6 (1721-1775) revealed no references to Israel Christian in connection with any large land grant. On Christian's lands in Kentucky, see List of Israel Christian's lands that have passed the registrars office in Kentucky, n.d., Fleming Papers. On county surveyors, see Sarah S. Hughes, Surveyors and Statesmen, pp. 89-91, 100-101, and 169-171.

28. On Christian's pre-mortem transfer of land to his son, see Stoner, A Seed-Bed of the Republic, pp. 433-4. On Anne Christian Fleming's marriage portion, see G[abriel] Jones to William Fleming, 28 March 1768 and Israel Christian to Anne Fleming, deed of gift, 28 November 1768, both in William Fleming Papers.

Under common law the right of curtesy entitled a man to a life interest in any lands his wife possessed in fee simple or in tail during their marriage, provided that the couple had a legitimate child born alive which might have been capable of inheriting the estate. Black's Law Dictionary, 5th ed. (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1979), p. 346.

On the sense of dynastic succession as expressed by Virginians generally, see James Deen, "Patterns of Testation: Four Tidewater Counties in Colonial Virginia." American Journal of Legal History (16 (1972): 154-176.

29. Stephen Trigg, New Dublin, to Anne Fleming, Belmont, 28 July 1773, Fleming Papers.

30. Israel and Elizabeth Christian to William Fleming, deed of reversion for Belmont, 12 Aug. 1773, ibid. Leonard Israel Fleming to William Fleming, deed of bargain and sale, 1 Sept. 1785, ibid. On Leonard's move to Kentucky, see Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, 25 June 1789, ibid.

31. Will of Israel Christian, 12 July 1784, Montgomery County Deeds and Wills, Book. B, p. 68, microfilm, Virginia State Library (hereafter VSL), Richmond. I have found no evidence that either Caleb Wallace, husband of Rosanna, or William Fleming, husband of Anne, mistreated their wives, proved incapable of managing property, or were dangerously in debt. The literature on inheritance generally relies on one of these reasons to explain legacies to married women designed to prevent their husband's from assuming control of the property.

Christian's inventory, like Patton's, was suspiciously small, although it did include five slaves. Appraisement of Israel Christian's Personal Estate, 14 January 1785, Montgomery County Deeds and Wills, Book. B, pp. 66-67, microfilm, VSL.

32. Genealogy of William Fleming, Fleming Papers. For birthdate, see Edmund P. Goodwin, Colonel William Fleming of Botetourt, 1728-1795 (Roanoke, Va.: Progress Press, 1976), p. 3.

33. Ibid. and "William Fleming," Dictionary of American Biography (hereafter DAB)(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931)6: 461.

34. See, for example, [Patrick Henry] to [William Fleming], 22 Nov. 1773; Thomas Bullitt to William Fleming, 12 Mar. 1774; [John Todd?] to William Fleming, 3 May 1776; and William Fleming, right to warrant 2,000 acres of land in Kentucky for his service as a surgeon, 2 Nov. 1779, all in Fleming Papers. Thomas Walker to J. Bull, William Bowen, and Henry Willis, 28 Mar. 1774, ibid. concerning their taking possession of Fleming's land which was part of the Loyal Company grant establishes that Fleming's activities as a speculator date from at least as early as 1762. On the scope of Fleming's Kentucky land holdings, see Inventory of William Fleming's lands and books, 1780, ibid.

35. Quotation is from Stephen Trigg to William Fleming, 14 Jan. 1779, Fleming Papers. See also William Christian to William Fleming, 29 Jan. 1779 and n.d., in ibid.

Stephen Trigg's parents lived in Bedford County, and the family appears to have been in Virginia since the latter part of the seventeenth century. Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 27 (1919): 323-324, fn. 4a.

36. Ibid. Quotation is from William Christian to William Fleming, 29 Jan. 1779, Fleming Papers.

37. Will of William Fleming, 1795, certified copy, Fleming Papers. On "heirs," see Black's Law Dictionary, p. 651.

38. Quotations from William Russell to William Fleming, 21 May 1779, and P. Henry to William Fleming, 29 Mar. 1780, both in Fleming Papers. Thomas Jefferson to William Fleming, appointment as Commissioner for settling "the title of Claimers to unpatented Lands" in Kentucky, 26 June 1779, ibid. For evidence of Fleming's continuing speculation in Kentucky lands, see H. Tayler to William Fleming, 1 Apr. 1784; James Bennett to William Fleming, 4 Nov. 1784; Harry Innes to William Fleming, 22 July 1785 and 11 Feb. 1786; and James Speed to William Fleming, 5 Jan. 1788, all in ibid.

39. On his father's death, see John Frederick Dorman, The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia (Louisville, Kentucky: The Filson Club, 1982), pp. 3-4. On Preston's wealth see Award to William Preston of John Preston's share of land owned jointly by James Patton and others, 24 Feb. 1762, Preston Family Papers, box 2, VHS. On the education of William Preston, see Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 Feb. 1843. On Preston's work for his uncle, see James Patton to William Preston, 13 Sept. and 3 Dec. 1753 and 2 May 1755, Preston Family Papers, box 1, VHS. Quotation is from James Patton to William Preston, n.d., ibid. On Preston's book purchases, see William Preston's account with David Robinson, 27 May 1761, ibid., box 2; Alexander Purdie to William Preston, 21 Feb. 1774, ibid., box 3; William Preston, Bill for Books, 13 July 1776, ibid., box 4. For a discussion of some contemporary literature, see William Fleming to William Preston, 17 Dec. 1756, Draper Collection, 1 QQ 140-141.

40. On Robinson's origins and background see Will of David Robinson, 27 May 1805, Fayette County Will Book A, pp. 305-307, Kentucky State Library and Archives, Frankfort. The will includes bequests to the Presbyterian Congregation in Lifford Parish, County Donegal, Ireland and to the

Hibernian Society in Philadelphia. Chalkley, Chronicles 2:109-110; Stoner, Seed-Bed, p. 79; and Summers, Annals of Southwestern Virginia, pp. 56, 69, and 314.

41. David Robinson to William Preston, 21 Mar. 1763, Draper Collection 2 QQ 39-41.

42. David Robinson, Fort Preston, to [William Fleming] 22 Oct. 1764, Fleming Papers.

43. David Robinson to William Fleming, 16 Feb. 1765, ibid. Fleming is quoted in Robinson's letter.

44. Ibid. Summers, Annals, p. 69 and Stoner, Seed-Bed of the Republic, pp. 474-475. On Robinson's death see Will of David Robinson, 27 May 1805, Fayette County Will Book A, pp. 305-307 and Deposition of William Robinson, 27 April 1806, in Chalkley, Chronicles 2:109-110.

45. David Robinson to William Preston, 13 Aug. 1770, Draper Collection, 2 QQ 118 and William Preston to Edward Johnson, 2 Aug. 1774, Preston Family Papers, box 3, VHS.

46. On economic dislocation generally during and immediately following the American Revolution, see John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, The Economy of British America, 1607-1789 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985)pp. 358-377. Quotations from Alexander Stuart to [?] 29 Nov. 1794, Stuart-Baldwin Papers, Alderman Library and Will of William Preston, 1777, Codicil, 11 Feb. 1781, Francis Preston Memorandum Book, Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection.

On Stuart's family background see Waddell, Annals of Augusta County, pp. 366-367 and John Lewis Peyton, History of Augusta County, Virginia, 2d ed. (Bridgewater, Va., 1953), pp. 308-309. On his service in the House of Delegates, see Cynthia Miller Leonard, The General Assembly of Virginia (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1978), p.135.

47. Stoner, Seed-Bed of the Republic, pp. 316-318. George Skillern to William Preston, bond for service as undersheriff, Nov. 1959; George Skillern and Benjamin Estill, bond to John Buchanan, 18 Nov. 1761; William Preston, sheriff, "List of fees Delivered to Messrs Skillern & Estill to Collect," fee book, Jan. 1762, all in Preston Family Papers, box 2, VHS.

48. On Madison's scheme see Frank L. Dewey, "The Waterson-Madison Affair," in Thomas Jefferson Lawyer (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986), chapter 5. Skillern's letter contains references to the

principals in the case. George Skillern to William Preston, 30 Oct. 1770, Preston Family Papers, box 3, VHS.

49. The Waterson-Madison cases never came to trial; they were dismissed because the plantiffs failed to post bond to cover court costs. Dewey, Thomas Jefferson, p. . On the suit in Botetourt County see Summers, Annals, p. 153.

50. William Preston, "Waste Book," 7 Jan. 1756, Preston Family Papers, box 1, VHS. It remains unclear who inscribed the book and when. According to his daughter, Preston did not receive a classical education, Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 Feb. 1843.

51. William Preston, commission as captain of a company of rangers, 11 Dec. 1756; William Preston, commission as lieutenant colonel of Augusta County militia, 14 June 1759; William Preston, commission as colonel in Botetourt County militia, 22 Dec. 1769; William Preston, commission as county lieutenant, Fincastle County, 7 Oct. 1775; William Preston, commission as county lieutenant, Montgomery County, 21 Dec. 1776, all in Preston Family Papers, VHS. William Fleming, commission as county lieutenant of Botetourt County, 4 Apr. 1776, Fleming Papers. For others, see Chalkley, Chronicles, 3:466 and 468; Summers, Annals, pp. 270 and 336; Stoner, Seed-Bed of the Republic, pp. 79 and 93; Peyton, History of Augusta, p. 314. See also Albert H. Tillson, Jr., "The Militia and Popular Political Culture in the Upper Valley of Virginia, 1740-1775," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 94 (1986): 289-290.

52. Justices of the Peace of Colonial Virginiam 1757-1775, Virginia State Library Bulletin nos. 2 and 3 (Richmond, 1921.), pp. 66-67 and 97-99; Hughes, Surveyors and Statesmen, pp. 168-171 and Tables 1-5; McIlwaine, ed., Journals of the House of Burgesses, "Burgesses," vol. 11 (1766, 1767, 1768, 1770, 1771, 1772, 1773, 1774, 1775). Leonard, General Assembly, pp. 133 and 135.

53. Leonard, General Assembly, pp. 109-110, 112, 114, 117, and 119. Trigg did not attend the second and fourth conventions, ibid., pp. 112 and 117. Christian was declared ineligible by the fourth convention because he was serving in the army, ibid., p. 117. Thad W. Tate contends that there is no record that any of the Fincastle representatives attended the first convention, see "The Fincastle Resolutions: Southwest Virginia's Commitment," Journal of the Roanoke Valley Historical Society 9 (1975): 22. Stoner, Seed-Bed of the Republic, p. 292.

54. Hughes, Surveyors and Statesmen, pp. 72-73 and 106-130. William Preston, bond to execute office of surveyor of Montgomery County, 2 Sept. 1777, Montgomery County Court Papers, VSL. Quotations from James Neville to William Preston, 30 Jan. 1783, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS and Edward Johnson to William Preston, 10 Dec. 1779, ibid., box 4. On the continuing importance of land speculation to the wealth of the backcountry elite see Lands surveyed for Alexander Stuart, 1794, 1795, and 1801, Stuart-Baldwin Papers; Account of taxes paid by N. Hart for the Representatives of William Preston, deceased, c. 1806, Preston Family Papers-Didier Collection, Carol H. Newman Library, Virginia State University and Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg; Horatio Sharpe to Evan Shelby, 26 Feb. 1767, Shelby Family Papers, vol. 1; John Murdocke's bill to Evan Shelby for surveying, 1767, ibid.; John Floyd, survey for Evan Shelby in Fincastle County, Virginia, 1775, ibid.; John Taylor to William Preston, 8 June 1782, Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS; William Christian to William Preston, 24 Apr. 1789, ibid.; Edmund Pendleton to William Preston, 8 Sept. 1775, ibid.; and William Christian to William Preston, 7 Feb. 1782, ibid.

55. On the cooperation of kin see the discussion of Fleming, Christian, and Trigg above and Edward Johnson to William Preston, 10 Dec. 1779 and List of land warrents sent to John Floyd by William Preston and Granville Smith, 22 Dec. 1780, both in Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS. On the relationship between Christian and Preston see Thomas Lewis to William Preston, 26 Dec. 1767 and William Christian to William Preston, 11 May 1774, both in ibid., boxes 2 and 3, VHS. Quotation is from William Peachy to William Preston, 24 Jan. 1775, ibid., box 4.

56. For an overview of economic development in the upper Shenandoah Valley see Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, pp. 133-229. On economic diversification among eighteenth-century Maryland planters, cf. Aubrey C. Land, "Economic Base and Social Structure: The Northern Chesapeake in the Eighteenth Century," Journal of Economic History 25 (1965): 639-654.

Chalkley, Chronicles 1:485-486. William Preston, "Waste Book," 7 Jan. 1756, box 1, Preston Family Papers, VHS; William Preston, Account of payments to soldiers, 25 Jan. 1756, ibid.; John Champe & Co., Maryland, receipt to William Preston, 28 Aug. 1759, ibid.; William Preston, receipt for peddlars' licenses, 14 Dec. 1765, ibid., box 3; Andrew Boyd to William Preston, 17 June 1766, Preston Family Papers-Didier Collection; Edward Johnson to William Preston, 8 Apr. 1774, 30 May 1774, 2 July 1774, 2 Aug. 1774, Preston Family Papers, box 3, VHS; List of sales of servants, [1774?], ibid. Edward Johnson to William Preston, 5 Sept.

1775, 28 Oct. 1779, 10 Dec. 1779, and n.d., ibid., box 4. Account book of Alexander Stuart and Garvis Lawson for servant sales, Oct. 1771-Feb. 1772, Stuart-Baldwin Papers; Alexander Stuart to [?] 29 Nov. 1794, ibid.; Alexander Stuart, bill of complaint, 3 July 1801, ibid. Evan Shelby, inventory of goods at Fort Pitt [1758], Shelby Family Papers, vol. 1; John Champion to Evan Shelby & Co., account, 1762, ibid.; David Baer to Evan Shelby, 15 July 1774, ibid.; David Ross to Evan Shelby, 29 Aug. 1765, ibid.; Evan Shelby, Samuel Postlethwait, and Edmund Moran, power of attorney to William Trint, 176[?], ibid.; Articles of agreement between Evan Shelby and Moses McClan, 2 July 1767, ibid.; Articles of agreement between Evan Shelby and Andrew Greer, 4 Sept. 1776, ibid.

57. Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, pp. 161-188. Will of William Christian, 13 Mar. 1786, Misc. Papers, Filson Club. List of William Preston's taxable property, 10 Apr. 1782. Articles of agreement between William Preston and James Doyell to act as overseer for Greenfield, 5 Dec. 1772, Preston family Papers, box 3, VHS; John Byrns to William Preston, receipt for wages as overseer, [before 1776] ibid.; William Preston agreement with Richard McCoy to serve as overseer, 27 Mar. 1781, ibid., box 4; Decision of arbitrators in a dispute between William Preston and his tenant David McNeely, 21 May 1781, ibid.; Thomas Forte and David Carr to William Preston, 24 July 1781, ibid.; Articles of agreement between William Preston and John Williams, 18 Mar. 1783, ibid., box 5. William Preston to Letitia Breckinridge, 7 Mar. 1774 and 22 June 1777, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1, LC. Articles of agreement between William Fleming and James Hinds, 16 Oct. 1767, Trigg-Carson Collection, Alderman Library, University of Virginia. William Preston to William Fleming, 31 July 1779, Fleming Papers.

58. David Robinson to William Preston, 18 May 1759, Draper Collection 2 QQ 21-23. Cf. J. A. Leo Lemay, ed. Robert Bolling Woos Anne Miller: Love and Courtship in Colonial Virginia, 1760 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), pp. 2-11.

59. David Robinson to William Preston, 18 May 1759, Draper Collection 2 QQ 21-23.

60. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 12-13. David Robinson to William Preston, 5 Nov. 1761, Draper Collection 2QQ 34-35.

61. Edward Johnson to William Preston, 16 Sept. 1773, [ca. 1774-1775], and 17 July 1775, Preston Family Papers, box 3, VHS. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 22 and 47-63.

62. Edward Johnson to William Preston, 3 Feb. 1778 and 28 Oct. 1779, Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS. Dorman, Prestons, p. 68.

63. James Adams to William Preston, 13 Aug. 1766, Preston Family Papers, box 2, VHS and Dorman, Prestons, pp. 12-13, 47-48, and 52. Adams actually faced considerable delay in shipping the books to Preston. Letita Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 Feb. 1843. See also An Inventory of William Fleming's Lands and books, 1780, Fleming Papers and the discussion of some contemporary literature in William Fleming to William Preston, 17 Dec. 1756, Draper Collection 1 QQ 140-141.

64. Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 Feb. 1843. Will of William Preston, 29 Mar. 1777, Francis Preston Memorandum Book, Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 9 Sept. 1783 and 17 Jan. 1785, Fleming Papers. On the education of elite children, see also Mary Trigg to Anne Fleming, 3 Feb. 1780, ibid. For schoolbook purchases see William Preston, Accounts and Memos, 1771-1772, Preston Family Papers, box 3, VHS.

65. "John Brown," in James McLachlan, ed. Princetonians, 1748-1768: A Biographical Dictionary (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 16. John Brown to William Preston, 13 Jan. 1773, 18 Feb. 1774, and 28 May 1774, Draper Collection 2 QQ 141, 3 QQ 8, and 3 QQ 29. "James Brown," DAB 3:126. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 40-42. William Christian to William Preston, 3 June 1776, Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS. Edward Johnson to William Preston, 31 July and 16 Nov. 1776 and [1778]; Account of Edward Johnson with Dixon & Hunter, 7 Aug. 1776; Samuel Blair receipt to William Preston, 11 Nov. 1776, all in ibid. box 4. Granville Smith to William Preston, 14 Feb. 1780, ibid.

On a venture of James Adams and William Preston to sell "Fifty Copies of Edwards on Original Sin, and Fifty Copies of Bates on Man's Redemption" to members of Brown's congregation, see [James] Adams to William Preston, 7 Mar. 1771, Preston-Radford Papers, Alderman Library, and John Brown to William Preston, 6 Mar. 1773, Draper Collection 2 QQ 144.

66. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 6 and 21. Arthur Campbell to William Davies, 3 Oct. 1782, in William P. Palmer, ed., Calendar of State Papers and Other Manuscripts, 1652-1781: Preserved in the Capitol at Richmond (1892; reprint, New York: Kraus, 1968)10:337. Waddell, Annals, p. 125.

67. Will of Robert Breckinridge, 17 Aug. 1772, Botetourt County Will Book A, pp. 36-40, microfilm, VSL; Will of William Christian, 13 Mar. 1786, Miscellaneous Papers, Filson Club; Will of William Preston, 29 Mar. 1777, Francis Preston Memorandum Book, Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection; Will of John Buchanan, 25 June 1769, Arthur Campbell Papers, Filson Club. Provisions of several of these wills are discussed in greater detail from the widow's perspective in chapter 2 below. On creation of interdependence among families through inheritance strategies, see Jean Butenhoff Lee, "Land and Labor: Parental Bequest Practices in Charles County, Maryland, 1732-1783,: in Louis Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds., Colonial Chesapeake Society (Chapel Hill: University of Noroth Carolina Press, 1988).

68. Will of Robert Breckinridge, 11 Aug. 1772; Will of William Christian, 13 Mar. 1786; and Will of William Preston, 29 Mar. 1777, and codicil, 11 Feb. 1781.

69. N.B. Avoiding financial embarrassment by no means represented the equivalent of avoiding debt. Debt was an essential part of economic life in eighteenth-century Virginia.

70. Robinson died childless. Christian's only son died young. One of Fleming's sons died before reaching adulthood; the other failed to achieve status equivalent to that of his father. Although he is not discussed here, Stuart's son Archibald surpassed the successes of his father. I have made no attempt to follow the fortunes of the Lewis or Skillern children.

71. Quotations from William Preston to Lettice Breckinridge, 17 June 1783, Breckinridge Family Papers, LC and Francis Preston to John Preston, 5 June 1786, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS. On the difficulties of financing their educations, see also J[ohn] Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 17 Aug. 1783, Breckinridge Family Papers, LC ; Francis Preston to John [Breckinridge?] 6 Dec. 1784, ibid.; and Francis Preston to Susanna Preston, 16 Feb. 1786 and Francis Preston to John Preston 16 Feb. 1786, both in Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS.

Archibald Stuart also read law, but with Thomas Jefferson.

72. James Brown to James Breckinridge, 8 July 1787, James Breckinridge Correspondence, Alderman Library. Unfortunately the exact wording of Wythe's compliment may never be known, the bottom of the page has been damaged and the line in which it appears torn away.

73. J[ohn] Brown to James Breckinridge, 25 Feb. 1787 and 16 Dec. 1787, James Breckinridge Correspondence. See also James Brown to James Breckinridge, 17 May 1788, and John Brown to James Breckinridge, 30 Sept. 1788, and 28 Oct. 1788, all in ibid.

74. Quotations from John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 25 Jan. 1788, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 4, LC and Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 20 Nov. 1786, Papers of James Breckinridge, Alderman Library. See also John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 6 Nov. 1786 and 14 Dec. 1787, Breckinridge Family Papers, vols. 3 and 4, LC, and James Breckinridge to John Preston, 29 Aug. 1788, ibid., vol. 5.

75. John Preston to John Breckinridge, 28 Mar. 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3, LC; James Robertson to John Preston, 5 May 1786, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS; Alex. Smith to John Preston, 3 Dec. 1786, ibid.; James Patton Preston to John Preston, 22 Oct. 1791, transcript, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection, Filson Club; Francis Preston to John Preston, 8 May 1798, Preston-Radford Papers; Thomas Preston to John Preston, 1 Dec. 1801, Preston Family Papers-Didier Collection; Thomas Preston to John Preston, 4 Dec. 1802, Preston-Radford Papers. Quotation is from Thomas Preston to John Preston, 11 Apr. 1807, Preston Family Papers-Didier Collection.

John Preston also served as advisor to and supervisor of the education of his wife's brothers, William and Carlton T. Radford, see William Radford to [John Preston] 1 Aug. 1805 and Carlton T. Radford to John Preston, 27 May 1810, both in ibid.

76. Thomas Preston to James Breckinridge, 13 Sept. 1800, Papers of James Breckinridge. Benjamin Howard to James Breckinridge, 11 Jan. 1797, James Breckinridge Correspondence.

77. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 29, 32-34, 40-42, 48-55, and 57-60. "James Brown," DAB 3:126. Quotations from John Preston to James Breckinridge, 28 Jan. 1788, and Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 25 May 1812, both in Papers of James Breckinridge. See also John Preston to James Breckinridge, 11 Feb. 1788, in ibid.

78. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 29-34, 40-42, 44-46, 48-55, 57-60, 63-64, 71-72, and 84-85. "James Brown," DAB 3:126.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid. On the career of Breckinridge, see also Lowell H. Harrison, John Breckinridge, Jeffersonian Republican (Louisville: Filson Club, 1969).

81. On land speculation see Memorandum of agreement between John Fox and Isaac Shelby, 26 June 1779, Shelby Family Papers, vol. 2, LC; John Preston to John Breckinridge, 31 May 1784, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 2, LC; James Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 23 May 1784, 31 July 1787, ibid. vols. 2 and 4; James Breckinridge bond to Edmond Stephens, 13 May 1784, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS; John Preston, John Smith, Charles and Henry Skaggs, and Daniel and Mathias Harman, Agreement to procure land office treasury warrants and locate lands in Kentucky, 7 Feb. 1787, ibid.; John Preston succeeded his father as surveyor of Montgomery County. During the 1780s his brothers Francis and William Preston and his cousins William, John, and James Breckinridge all served as assistant surveyors under him. John Preston, Survey for George Lowman, 17 Feb. 1783; John Preston Survey, 17 Sept. 1783; Survey and order to pay signed by James Breckinridge, 1 Feb. 1784; Francis Preston, Field book of surveys, 29 Apr.-14 May 1784; John Preston, Surveys, 12 Sept. 1784; Francis Preston to John Preston 16 Feb. 1786, and John Preston to Alexander Breckinridge, 1784, all in ibid.

On agriculture see Account of Jacob Hershew with Archibald Stuart for making barrels, 1812; Account of Estate of A. Fulton with Archibald Stuart for sawing plank and coopering at the distillery, 1809-1818; Account of Isaac College with Archibald Stuart for advertising land to rent and printing handbills advertising Stuart's taking charge of a mill, 1812; Account of John Paul with Archibald Stuart, 1813-1815; all in Stuart-Baldwin Papers.

On industry see John Preston to James Breckinridge, 14 May 1799 and 31 Mar. 1798, both in Papers of James Breckinridge, Alderman Library. Carter Beverley's bond to purchase Botetourt Iron Works, in account of land transactions of Carter Beverley with James Breckinridge, Feb. 1801-Mar. 1810, in ibid. Description of Francis Preston's ironworks, n.d., in ibid. Benjamin Howard to James Breckinridge, 1 Dec. 1798, in ibid. David May to [John Preston?] 24 June 1786, Preston-Radford Papers. Agreement between George Wampler and JOhn Preston concerning the operation of a gold mine, 26 June 1786, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS.

Both Andrew Lewis and James Breckinridge were partners in a plan to develop a hotel in Fincastle. Scheme of a Hotel to be errected in Fincastle [1794] Papers of James Breckinridge. Francis Preston owned a store complete with storekeeper in the 1790s, see Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 8 Oct. 1797, in ibid.

82. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 30-34, 40-42, 52-55, 71-72, 84-85. "James Brown," DAB3:126. Quotations from Eliza Henry Preston, Autobiography, n.d., Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection, and John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 29 January 1786, Papers of James Breckinridge.

83. James Brown to James Breckinridge, 15 Mar. 1790, James Breckinridge Correspondence. William Preston to James Breckinridge, 26 June 1812, Papers of James Breckinridge.

84. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 50-52 and John Preston to William Preston, 15 Feb. 1809, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection.

85. Dorman, Prestons, p. 51 and Eliza Ann Preston to Francis Preston, 19 Sept. 1821, Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection.

86. In 1782 William Breckinridge was twenty-three years old. Dorman, Prestons, p. 29.
Will of Robert Breckinridge, 17 Aug. 1772; William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 20 Nov. 1782, bill of sale for two negroes, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1, LC; William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 26 Feb. and 6 Oct. 1784, ibid., vol. 2. Quotation is from Moses Haven to John Breckinridge, 8 May 1786, ibid., vol. 3. See also the remark by John Breckinridge concerning the incident in John Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, [June?] 1786, ibid.

87. Quotations from James Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 22 Mar. 1788 and 19 Feb. 1792, ibid., vols. 5 and 8; and Lettice Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, Sept. 1792, ibid., vol. 8. William Breckinridge and John Breckinridge to William McClanachan, deed, 27 Dec. 1789, Botetourt County Deed Book 4, p. 155, microfilm, VSL.

88. Quotations from William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 1 Aug. and 16 Oct. 1793, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 9, LC.

89. Quotation is from William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 25 July 1795, ibid., vol. 12. See also William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 24 Mar. and 30 Sept. 1794, ibid., vols. 10 and 11.

90. Quotations from William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 30 Sept. 1794, 23 May 1795, 25 Jan. 1795, and 2 Aug. 1796, in ibid., vols. 11, 12, 10, and 14. See also William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 16 Oct. 1793, 10 Mar. 1794, and 25 July 1795, ibid., vols. 9, 10, and 12.

91. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 29-30 and William Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 5 Apr. 1820, Papers of James Breckinridge.

92. Ages at marriage calculated from information in Dorman, Prestons, pp. 29-89. The median age at marriage for the cousins was 28 years. The average age at marriage for eight of their wives was 18 years; the median age was 17.5 years.

Quotations from James Brown to James Breckinridge, 4 Apr. 1790, James Breckinridge Correspondence; and Thomas Walker to Francis Preston, 24 Feb. 1791, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers. See also John Smith to John Preston, 27 Aug. 1780, James Breckinridge Correspondence; James Brown to James Breckinridge, 13 Aug. 1787, ibid.; James McDowell to John Preston, 4 Jan. 1798, Preston-Radford Papers; Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 26 June 1786, Papers of James Breckinridge; [?] to [John Breckinridge] [1784] Breckinrdige Family Papers, LC, vol. 2; Poem to John Breckinridge and his lady, 21 June 1785, ibid. Francis Preston to William Preston, 28 May 1793, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection; William Fleming to Anne Fleming, 22 Dec. 1784, Fleming Papers.

93. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 35, 52, 56, 135-138, and 218-220. Quotation is from John Preston to Francis Preston, 26 Dec. 1786, William and Mary Quarterly 2nd series, vol. 1 (1921): 48-49. On dueling and the third generation, see also Eliza Preston Madison to William Preston, 4 Dec. 1794, typescript, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection.

94. Quotation is from John Preston to John Breckinridge, 14 Apr. 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, LC, vol. 3. On the details of the birth, see Dorman, Prestons, p. 94. See also Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 11 Jan. 1794, 30 Apr. 1794, 13 Apr. 1795, 22 Sept. 1796, 15 July 1798, 27 June 1811, all in Papers of James Breckinridge; James McClung to James Breckinridge, 19 Sept. 1793, ibid.; and John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 24 Feb. 1804, Breckinridge-Marshall Family Papers, Filson Club.

95. Eliza Henry Preston, Autobiography, n.d.; Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 17 May 1809, Papers of James Breckinridge; John Preston to Susanna Preston, 23 May 1810, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection; John Preston to William Radford Preston, 16 May 1811, Preston Family Papers-Didier Collection; Lysander Smith, William Radford Preston, and John B. Preston to John Preston, 1 Oct. 1812, ibid. Quotation is from Robert Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 26 Mar. 1813, Papers of James Breckinridge.

96. Quotations from Allen Taylor to James Breckinridge, 24 Dec. 1819, Papers of James Breckinridge; Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 6 July 1821, ibid.; and Robert Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 9 Apr. 1823, ibid.

97. Quotation from Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 26 Dec. 1811, Papers of James Breckinridge. See also Isaac Preston to James Breckinridge, 11 Jan. 1812 and 9 Feb. 1813, ibid.; Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 21 June 1812, ibid.; and Dorman, Prestons, pp. 218-220. Dorman does not identify Isaac's mother.

98. John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 31 May 1798, Papers of James Breckinridge. Dorman identifies Kitty's mother as Amelia Sebastian, daughter of Judge Benjamin and Amelia Broadwater Sebastian. She married Dr. James Chambers in Jefferson County, Kentucky in 1789. Prestons, p. 136, fn. 1.

99. Quotations from John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 14 Jan. 1805, Papers of James Breckinridge; and Susanna P. Hart to James Breckinridge, 30 Sept. 1806, ibid. See also Kitty Breckinridge's account with John A. Sietz; John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 16 Sept. 1805; and Nathaniel Hart to James Breckinridge, 26 Oct. 1805; all in ibid.

100. Quotations from William S. Waller to James Breckinridge, 27 Dec. 1812; John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 31 May 1798; John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 14 Jan. 1805; Nathaniel Hart to James Breckinridge, 26 Oct. 1805; and William Waller to James Breckinridge, 3 Feb. 1817; all in Papers of James Breckinridge. On Waller's background, see Dorman, Prestons, pp. 135-138.

101. This conclusion contrasts with that of Frederick Jackson Turner and affirms that of Thomas Perkins Abernethy. See Turner, The Frontier in American History (New York: Holt, 1947) and Abernethy, Three Virginia Frontiers (Baton Rouge: Louisana State University Press, 1940).

CHAPTER II

"IF IT IS WITHIN MY POWER": WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE IN THE VIRGINIA BACKCOUNTRY

The complementary role played by women enabled men to achieve the English ideal of success on the Virginia frontier. Like the men, the women of the backcountry elite found aspects of their cultural heritage well-suited to Virginia. Three distinctive factors shaped the experience of elite women in backcountry Virginia--the commercial (mercantile and trade) background of the immigrant elite who settled beyond the Blue Ridge, the unique conditions of frontier life not shared by those living along the seaboard, and the social and legal system of Virginia (often described by historians as patriarchal). This chapter examines the combined impact of these forces on the lives of three generations of backcountry women.[1]

The immigrant generation brought with them the tradition of the active wife, which accorded women a role in family business. The duties of elite men in governing and defending the frontier required their frequent absences from

home and helped to keep this tradition alive among the second generation. The patriarchal organization of society in western Virginia proved flexible enough to accommodate this behavior. After the American Revolution, however, western women encountered more restrictions on activities outside the domestic realm. Aging second generation widows found they lacked certain powers that their mothers had enjoyed. Third generation women found their ability to act in the so-called public sphere even more circumscribed, although some possessed the same knowledge of family affairs as their mothers and grandmothers.

The Immigrants

A majority of the immigrant elite who arrived in the upper Shenandoah Valley in the 1730s and 1740s came directly from Ulster or from Ulster via Pennsylvania. Their commercial backgrounds, not their ethnic origins, most clearly distinguished them from their less well-to-do neighbors and provided the elite with a system of shared values and assumptions. As they pertained to women, these assumptions included the view that wives should remain knowledgeable enough about the economic concerns of the family to carry on alone whenever their husbands deemed it necessary.[2]

Unfortunately few historians have concerned themselves

with the role of women in commercial families in England, Ireland, and Scotland or in Pennsylvania. The historical literature suggests, however, that the role of the active wife was far from unknown. Wives of both petty tradesmen and merchants apparently were fully cognizant of the economic world in which their husbands operated. Often they were literate, familiar with forms for receipts and other simple procedures used in daily business, and aware of the nature of the wider mercantile world. Wives of small tradesmen may have been more involved in the day-to-day affairs of business than merchants' wives, but even the latter sometimes assisted with special orders or in other ways. Married women rarely, if ever, functioned as initiators in the world of commercial affairs, but many possessed enough knowledge of the family business to enable them to act for their husbands or other male relatives when necessary.[3]

The economic endeavors of elite women who immigrated to the Shenandoah Valley were in keeping with the traditions of mercantile families in the English borderlands and in Pennsylvania.[4] That is, these women were literate and familiar with basic legal and business forms, and they grasped the outlines of the commercial world in which they lived, a world that included agriculture and land speculation as well as trade. Wives proved sufficiently well informed to manage family affairs after they became widows, although widows, like wives, usually acted as

stewards rather than as initiators of speculative ventures.

A close examination of the lives of three women who immigrated to Virginia as adults illustrates the influence of their commercial heritage on their Virginia experience. Elizabeth Patton Preston and Mary McDowell Greenlee both arrived in the upper Valley in the late 1730s with their husbands and other kin. Preston came directly from Ulster, while Greenlee's route from Ireland took her through Pennsylvania. Catherine North, a resident of Dublin, arrived somewhat later; the first mention of her presence in the Shenandoah Valley is dated 1775. Like Greenlee, she and her husband also entered the Valley from Pennsylvania.

Born in Burncrannack, Ireland, Elizabeth Patton was the daughter of Sarah Lynn and Henry Patton. Her father, who had fought for the Williamite cause in 1689, held Springfield Manor in County Donegal. While still in her twenties, Elizabeth married John Preston, a shipwright, and the two made their home in Newton Limavaddy, a market town located on the main road between Londonderry and Colerain. In 1738 the Prestons and their four children, Letitia, Margaret, William, and Anne, joined Elizabeth's brother, James Patton, and set sail for Virginia.[5]

Upon their arrival in Virginia, the Preston family settled on Beverley Manor about seven miles below the site of Staunton. Although John continued to hold a share in the

potential benefits of his brother-in-law's speculative activities, he also worked as a cabinet maker in the Valley. Elizabeth bore at least two more children in Virginia, a son James, who died in infancy, and a daughter, Mary. After 1746 the Prestons operated an ordinary in their home.[6]

After John Preston died in the winter of 1747/48, his widow served as administrator of the estate. The amount of bond she posted, £100, appears surprisingly small, given the family's standing in the community and the fact that John Preston had owned at least one servant. The bond's size lends credence to a family tradition that John Preston's death left his widow in straightened circumstances.[7]

Elizabeth Preston quickly took steps to settle the estate, by initiating suits in the Augusta County Court and paying the quitrents on the family's 334 acres in Beverley Manor. She also gave bond to William Beverley for six pounds and six pence, probably to insure payment of the balance of her husband's twenty-three pound debt to Beverley. She continued to run the ordinary in her home until around 1750 when she moved her family to Staunton.[8] She may have recognized that the town offered greater opportunities for a single woman than the countryside, and the move also brought her closer to her brother. In these years she put her daughters to work embroidering linen. Apparently the business proved a great success. By 1754 the eldest daughter, Letitia, was able to loan her brother,

William, thirty-two pounds in Virginia currency. According to his biographer, the sisters did well enough financially to purchase a slave woman, and they maintained individual store accounts after reaching majority.[9]

Elizabeth Preston maintained her own household and oversaw the management of her family at least until the marriage of her last daughter in 1764. By the late 1760s, however, she had abandoned Staunton and gone to live with her son's family some eighty miles to the southwest in newly created Botetourt County; three of her daughters also lived nearby. When her son moved an additional fifty miles to the southwest in 1772, Preston appears to have stayed behind in Botetourt County. Two years before her death in 1776, she was still signing receipts and witnessing official documents. In the years after her death, family members remembered her as a woman of "masculine understanding, great ambition, and impetuosity of temper."[10]

Mary McDowell Greenlee's Irish background is less fully documented than that of Preston. She was born in Ulster to Margaret Irvine and Ephraim McDowell in 1707; her father had fought in the defense of Antrim as a teenager in 1688. In the late 1720s or early 1730s, Ephraim McDowell immigrated to Pennsylvania with his sons John and James and his daughter Mary. She probably married James Greenlee there. In the fall of 1737 she and her husband, her father, and her brother John arrived in the Shenandoah Valley.

James was already living on Beverley Manor.[11]

John McDowell possessed surveying skills and almost immediately upon arriving in Virginia became an agent for Benjamin Borden, holder of a land grant in the Valley which was second in size only to that of William Beverley. John Lewis, another Ulster emigrant and a kinsman of the McDowells, was serving in a similar position for Beverley, as was James Patton. Greenlee's husband James also located and showed land to prospective settlers for Borden. Lewis, McDowell, and Patton speculated heavily in western Virginia lands, and all became backcountry entrepreneurs whose principal commodity was land. Greenlee's husband speculated on a more modest scale.[12]

Years later Mary Greenlee still demonstrated a competent understanding of procedures and policies employed in settling Borden's Land. She recognized that the system of improvements required by the Virginia Council for holders of large land grants to secure patents had been subverted. She also expressed some familiarity with the boundaries of various tracts. While she professed little knowledge of the precise terms of her brother's agreement with Borden, she possessed a much fuller understanding of and influence over the disposition of real estate within her own household. When Benjamin Borden, Jr. refused James Greenlee's request to locate 1,000 acres that he had purchased, Mary Greenlee had the authority, in her husband's absence, to enter an

agreement with Borden relocating the acreage. Her ability to influence decisions affecting the entire family was not limited to periods when her husband was away, however. When she rejected the site of the first cabin her husband built for them, the couple abandoned it and constructed another at a different location.[13]

James Greenlee died in 1763, a quarter-century after immigrating to Virginia. His wife and son shared administration of the estate. Mary Greenlee survived her husband by forty-six years but never remarried. One nineteenth-century historian later claimed that "To the end of her long life she rode, erect, on horseback over all the country-side, giving an active personal supervision to her business affairs, in which she was at once thrifty and prosperous."[14]

Catherine North, a generation younger than both Greenlee and Preston, represented the most a commercial woman of affairs could achieve in backcountry Virginia. By 1775 North had travelled from Dublin through Philadelphia and settled in Staunton with her husband Roger, who owned a tanyard there and probably engaged in other kinds of trade. After their arrival in Virginia, the couple continued to maintain close ties with George Davis, a Philadelphia merchant. When Matthew Read, Davis's factor or storekeeper in Staunton, died in September 1776, Catherine North initiated a correspondence with Davis that spanned nearly a

decade. Her letters reveal a woman of boundless confidence who proved fully conversant with the larger economic system and the legal structure of backcountry Virginia.[15]

Ten days after Read's death, North informed Davis that "Mr. North and I went [and] took an Inventory of all his goods and by the Consent of his Brother and After the funerall had them Removed to our House." The Norths appropriated Read's account books and bonds, which they locked in his desk, and Roger North took Davis's power of attorney and went to consult an attorney. Roger North wanted to administer the estate if Davis and Read's brother concurred; Catherine was writing for her husband to ask Davis his opinion in the matter. She also inquired about the possibility of getting goods from Philadelphia in the fall, "as Mr. North has some Money bye him and wou'd be glad to turn it into Trade."[16]

Six weeks later Roger North himself was dead. Catherine told Davis that his death "has left me in the greatest Distress--Not on Account of fortune, thank God I have aEnough of that, but being far from anyone Belonging to me though I have the Best of Neibours who Strives to Alleviate my Distress." North again asked about trade goods from Philadelphia, and explained that "My Dr. Rogr. has left me a Thousand Pounds Sterling and Executor so that I intend to strive to add to my son[']s fortune by Till I can get my affairs settled to go home which will take me some

considerable time." She also offered to administer Matthew Read's estate if Davis would send her a power of attorney.[17]

Davis's preference that Gabriel Jones, a prominent Valley attorney, oversee the settling of Read's estate did not deter North from offering help and advice. She promised to give Jones "all the Insite into Mr. Reads affairs I can," and suggested that Davis sell the house and lot in Staunton where Read lived, "as it will take the Rent for many years to put it in repair . . . [and] There is Money Plenty now in this Country and Severall People wanting Place's so that I think it wou'd sell well now." Having abandoned the hope of getting goods from Philadelphia to sell in Staunton, North this time asked Davis what items would sell well in Philadelphia and inquired about the prices for "skins, furrs, Beeswax, and Lining [Linen] as I am deteremined to traid there if there is any Goods to be had." She closed with a request that Davis assist in getting a tombstone "of twenty pounds price" for Mr. North.[18]

Two months later, even though Davis had clearly wanted Jones to handle Matthew Read's estate, North encouraged Davis to come to March court to settle the matter "as there is no one to administer." She argued that regardless of the small size of the estate, there were "a great many Debts on his Books besides Bonds & Notes which you can't recover till you Administer and Mr. Joans seems to de[c]line it but wishes you wou'd come up and do it yourself." North

complimented Davis on the high rent of fourteen pounds per annum he had gotten for Read's house, especially considering "it is in Excessive bad Repair," but she still maintained that it would have been in his best interest to sell.[19]

The movements of Howe's Army in the summer of 1777 prevented North from returning to Philadelphia and from thence to Ireland as she had intended. Instead, in the fall of that year she married Edward Parke and moved to Richmond. In December of 1778, she informed Davis that when last in Staunton she had "got Mr. Joans to apply to the court & get Mr. Reads effects given up to the sheriff as there was no one to administer." When the sheriff opened the desk, Parke was pleased to see that the amount due in notes and bonds exceeded three hundred pounds. She enclosed a copy of her receipt from the sheriff for Read's goods, but claimed she lacked the time to make a copy of the accounts.[20]

Edward Parke died in 1780, and in June of 1783 Catherine Parke married Sampson Mathews, a Staunton merchant during the 1760s and 1770s, an Augusta County justice, and a kinsman of George Davis. By 1785 the Mathewses were living in Richmond, and George Davis had moved to Trenton, New Jersey.[21]

In May of that year Catherine Mathews corresponded one last time with Davis concerning the Matthew Read estate. By then the effects of three marriages, the loss of two spouses, and the impact of the Revolutionary war appear to

have dimmed her memory of the affair. She claimed to remember nothing except that "When I delivered up the goods to the sheriff, Mr. John Poage, I took his Recit for them and likewise a List of the Bonds which I believe I either sent to you or Mr. Jones." The money from the sale of the estate remained in the hands of the sheriff. The money Roger North paid Jones and otherwise laid out on Davis's account, she asserted, should have more than covered the balance of any debt the Norths owed Davis, but she nevertheless promised that "When I go to Staunton I will sarch through my Peapers for the Recites." Mathews closed her letter to her now kinsman by reflecting on the happiness of the married state and encouraging him to "continue no longer a Old Batchlor."[22]

This extended examination of the role of Catherine North Parke Mathews in settling Matthew Read's estate reveals a great deal about the extent to which some immigrant women participated in the legal and commercial aspects of life in the upper Shenandoah Valley. Mathews demonstrated an easy familiarity with routine probate procedures and proved at home in a world of accounts, receipts, and bonds; she recognized the importance of such papers and saved them. She and Roger North worked as a team in matters involving the family's economic interest. They inventoried Read's estate together; later he consulted the attorney, while she wrote to Read's employer. Roger North

both confided in and probably consulted with his wife about his desire to import goods from Philadelphia. The fact that the couple lacked kin in Staunton may have contributed to their close working relationship, but Catherine North's familiarity with business and legal procedures clearly was not unique.

After Roger North's death Catherine actively pursued the Read affair and continually tried to establish a trading link with Philadelphia. Her letters exude confidence in her own judgment and in her ability to function in an economic arena that extended well beyond the domestic realm. She also administered the estates of her first two husbands, which included initiating suits in the Augusta County Court alone as a widow and later with subsequent spouses. She apparently held on to her property in Staunton, even after marrying and moving to Richmond. In 1787 Sampson Mathews agreed to build her a house on "water lot" in Staunton in exchange for her release of dower on another house and lot in the same town that he had sold. The new two-story house, with a kitchen, smokehouse, and other "necessary outhouses", was to be conveyed to two trustees for her benefit.[23]

Mathews' economic and legal concerns were primarily local or regional in scope, rarely ranging beyond Philadelphia when they extended that far. During the American Revolution, however, she grew anxious about the Irish estate of her son Philip, a minor. She feared,

perhaps with good reason since most of the upper Valley elite supported the patriot cause, that the British would confiscate the estate, and she seemed uncertain as to the best course of action. Her correspondence does not reveal how this problem was resolved.[24]

Unfortunately for Catherine Mathews, life with Sampson Mathews forced her to reconsider her opinion of marriage as the "happiest state." In 1791, she was back in court, this time petitioning for alimony pending the outcome of her suit for divorce. She had left Mathews' household a year earlier when he refused to give up his (slave?) mistress Lucy. In May of 1790 Mathews advertised in the newspaper that he would no long pay his wife's contracts as she had "absconded from his bed and board." In June he wrote to his attorney about a settlement. Mathews offered to return all the estate (or its equivalent) that Catherine Parke had brought to their marriage if she would renounce all "Right Title and Interest" in his estate and, secondly, to give security to pay all debts that she had incurred during their marriage. Her suit for alimony suggests that Catherine Mathews rejected his terms. The outcome of her petition and the suit for divorce remains unknown.[25]

The experiences of the Irish immigrants Preston, Greenlee, and North-Parke-Mathews all illustrate the continuing influence of one aspect of mercantile family life in Virginia, that of the informed and active wife. Although

the known degree of involvement for each woman varied, together their stories suggest a wide range of female participation in the so-called public sphere. Yet in spite of its clear importance, the commercial tradition was not the only factor that defined elite women's lives. Immigrants who entered the upper Shenandoah Valley before 1770 came to a frontier area. Valley residents who moved to Virginia's southwestern counties in the 1760s and 1770s, as did many of the elite families studied here, merely intensified their relationship with the frontier.

Immigrants and their Daughters on the Virginia Frontier

Historians have long speculated on the relationship between women and the frontier. One hypothesis that recurs frequently in the early American literature is that the very scarcity of women in frontier populations increased their value to society and resulted in increased economic advantages and corresponding power for them. One may legitimately ask whether such was the case on the eighteenth-century Virginia frontier, although a dearth of sources precludes a confident answer to the question.[26]

The absence of censuses or population lists that distinguish males and females make it difficult to determine just how "scarce" women were beyond the Blue Ridge. By 1790, the date of the first Federal census, white men

outnumbered white women by a ratio of 109 to 100 in the upper Shenandoah Valley and 113 to 100 in southwestern Virginia. While modern demographers consider these ratios abnormally high, they were by no means the highest in Virginia. In the growing piedmont towns of Richmond, Petersburg, Fredericksburg, and Alexandria, the ratio ranged from 169 to 129 white men per 100 white women.[27]

Unfortunately, the sex ratios for 1790 reveal little about the relative numbers of men and women living beyond the Blue Ridge in 1740 or 1770. A single "List of Souls" for two neighborhoods in Botetourt County, taken in 1782, reveals a sex ratio of 104 white men per 100 white women. Therefore, the 1790 sex ratio may represent an increase in the numbers of men in the population as the character of migration to the region changed. Historians of pre-Revolutionary western Virginia have long maintained that the immigrants who settled the area arrived in families. If such was indeed the case, then the astronomically high sex ratios that have existed for other frontier populations, most notably the seventeenth-century Chesapeake, probably never existed in the Valley. The inability to determine whether or not women were "scarce" on Virginia's eighteenth-century frontier makes it difficult to say whether or not "scarcity" contributed to increased economic advantages and power for women.[28]

To argue that the "scarcity" hypothesis may not be

applicable, however, is not to discount completely the influence of the frontier on women's lives. The surviving evidence suggests that it shaped elite women's lives in two ways, both of which were related to specific conditions of settlement and one of which pertained to the temporary absence, not a surplus, of men. Women on the eighteenth-century Virginia frontier often found themselves left to manage affairs alone for extended periods of time; this reinforced the tendency among mercantile families to involve women actively in family business. Women also found themselves facing physical threats beyond the ordinary uncertainties of eighteenth-century life. Fear of Indian attacks and worrying about the fate of husbands and sons engaged in governing and defending the frontier may have contributed to heightened levels of anxiety among both the first and second generations.[29]

The husbands of elite women oversaw the government and defense of an extensive frontier of settlement that stretched hundreds of miles into the interior of the continent. Not a line in the classic Turnerian sense, the Virginia frontier consisted of sparsely settled neighborhoods separated by vast uninhabited (according to British standards) spaces. By the 1750s the frontier included the upper Shenandoah Valley, settlements along the Cowpasture and Calfpasture rivers, habitations at the Forks of the James and in the Roanoke Valley, and a few families

along the New River in the vicinity of Draper's Meadows. The farthest reaches of the frontier extended to a sparsely settled area on the Holston River in what today is Tennessee. Before 1770, the entire area fell within the governmental jurisdiction of Augusta County. By that date the upper Shenandoah could no longer be considered frontier, but elite families had already begun the process of following other settlers west into southwest Virgina and later to Kentucky. In the same year the first new counties were formed from Augusta, and the same elite men headed those new governments.[30] The duties of the men who governed this extensive frontier took them from home in periods of peace as well as during times of war. Their peacetime duties included attendance at court, where many sat as justices, and seasonal surveying expeditions for those who served as county surveyors or their assistants.

The Virginia frontier was a cultural frontier as well as a frontier of settlement. Although no Indians lived permanently in the Shenandoah Valley when white settlers began arriving in the 1730s, northern Indians still travelled through it on expeditions to trade or raid southern Indians. During these migrations white settlers and Indians came into contact with each other, and misunderstanding and conflict sometimes ensued. Further inland along the Holston River and later in Kentucky, white settlements pressed against areas of Indian habitation or

the two groups competed for the same lands. During the Seven Years War when the French and the British fought over the fate of these interior lands, many Indian groups in the region allied themselves with the French. Conflict between Anglo-American settlers and the Indians resulted. This scenario repeated itself during the American Revolution, except that the British replaced the French as allies of the Indians in the war against the independent Americans.[31]

The boundaries of Virginia's frontier of settlement fluctuated according to the presence or absence of conflict along the cultural frontier. In periods of conflict with the Indians, white settlers on the farthest reaches of settlement abandoned their farmsteads and retreated eastward. Then elite families, not usually situated along the farthest reaches might find themselves on the front lines of the clash of cultures during periods of heated conflict. When the conflict subsided, settlement again fanned out and the old borders were restored or expanded.[32] During wartime the frequency and duration of men's absences from home increased, as they led the militia in defense of the region. Absence of men from their homes helped keep alive the tradition of an active role for women, especially wives, in managing family business affairs among the first and second generations of the frontier elite.

Men and women expressed both hostility toward and fear of the Indians. As early as 1742, Mary Greenlee's brother

John died in a skirmish with an Indian party near his home in the upper Shenandoah Valley. Indians killed Elizabeth Preston's brother James Patton while he was conducting business at Draper's Meadows in the New River Valley in 1755. Sampson Mathews's brother John and his family were presumedly killed by Indians and burned in their cabin at the forks of James River in the mid-1760s. By the 1770s at least some Virginians living on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge believed that the Indians had been "most Barbarously treated" and that the governor ought to have seen that they got justice for the "murders committed upon them under a Cloak of Friendship"; westerners never adopted such balanced attitudes.[33]

In 1764, in the aftermath of an Indian attack directed against settlers on the Calfpasture River, Elizabeth Preston and her youngest daughter, still living in Staunton, joined the rest of the townspeople in hiring thirteen or fourteen men to guard them from Indian attack. Preston's son-in-law, the Reverend John Brown, reported that he had found the two women "not a little affraid" but praised their determination to stay put. Privately, however, he debated whether or not the decision to remain was a wise one.[34]

A decade later, during Lord Dunmore's War, the frontier again contracted, leaving elite families in the New River Valley exposed to possible Indian attack. This time Brown wrote to his brother-in-law, William Preston, that he was

"in no ways satisfied" with the latter's situation, as it "lay too much in the way of the Indians." He cautioned that "New River has been the course they [the Indians] came formerly to War & probably will come [and] you had need be upon your watch & take every prudent method to prevent a surprize." Brown urged Preston to remove his wife and children to a safer place. Preston ignored the advice; one month later his wife Susanna gave birth to a son at Smithfield, only a few miles from the New River.[35]

A month later another of Preston's brothers-in-law, Edward Johnson, a Scottish merchant living in Manchester, wrote that his wife had "been very uneasie at the Stories we have here of yr county folks being killed." By August, Preston himself, away from home overseeing the defense of the county in his capacity as militia colonel, claimed that "Smithfield is now almost a Frontier and my Family are much exposed. The neighbors have Joined me to build a little Fort for our Defence. This is an uncomfortable way of living, but anything is better for me than running away."[36] One can only conjecture about the thoughts of Susanna Preston, who had left her home in eastern Virginia to marry Preston thirteen years earlier.[37]

By the fall of 1774, Anne Henry Christian, a neighbor of the Prestons and the wife of militia captain William Christian, had fled to the estate of her brother Patrick Henry at Scotchtown in Hanover County, well to the east of

the Blue Ridge. Her husband was in the Greenbrier River Valley (in present-day West Virginia) making his way northward toward Point Pleasant. En route to safety in Hanover, Christian wrote to her sister-in-law, Anne Fleming, at her home in the Roanoke River Valley (southwestern Virginia) that "the uneasiness I have sufferd in the Absence of your Dear Brother has had such an effect on my health that you would scarce know me, but I trust he will yet be preserved safe till his return in, & then I hope to be at ease in my mind." She asked Fleming for information on the state of affairs in "the upper parts."[38]

The Second Generation

The demands and pressures placed on men and women by frontier conditions nowhere appear more evident than in the letters Anne Fleming received from her husband William during Dunmore's War. The daughter of Israel Christian, a Dublin merchant who had immigrated to Virginia in the 1740s, Anne married William Fleming in 1763. He was a Scots emigrant and former surgeon's mate in the British Navy, who had arrived in Virginia in 1755 and fought in the backcountry during the Seven Years' War. In 1768 the couple moved from Staunton to the Roanoke River Valley in southwestern Virginia. In 1774 William commanded the Botetourt County militia at the battle of Point Pleasant,

while Anne remained at Belmont, the couple's farm.[39]

On September 4, 1774, William Fleming, en route to the Ohio River, attempted to reassure his wife that the danger to either of them from Indians was actually slight. Despite the Indian parties in the vicinity of Belmont only one man had been shot, and he was from among the "country people." Nevertheless the commander of the expedition was sending three militia men to guard Belmont, where Anne Fleming had offered refuge to her mother and sister, who were living further out in the exposed New River Valley. Anne could request that the soldiers be replaced if she found them "troublesome." William assured her that only two small Indian parties were in the area and that she "must give no attention to any reports you hear that may alarm you." He himself was in little danger from the "Indian Spies attending us now and then firing on a stragling person."[40]

Three days later William wrote to Anne regarding troop movements toward the Virginia frontier. He and Colonel Andrew Lewis would march with 400 or 500 men, and her brother William Christian would follow with another 200 or 300 men. Lord Dunmore was near Pittsburgh with 700 men. Later the same day he asked her to send down to the court house for the horses he had sent back and encouraged her to "keep up your spirits" and not believe hearsay. William appealed to the "Almighty" on Anne's behalf to "grant you Fortitude to bear up under disappointments and resignation

to his Divine will in the dispensations of his Providence."[41]

By September 9, Fleming encountered his wife's brother William Christian on the march. He reiterated information on troop movements and asked Anne to write to her brother's wife to "let her know he is well & acquainte her with any thing you think proper from any of my Letters." William added, "your prudence prevents me from saying any thing about your managing your affairs at home."[42]

When William next wrote to Anne on September 27, he was within five days march of the Ohio River and devoted most of the letter to an attempt to keep up both his own and his wife's spirits. "My Dr Nancy that you & Lenny [their son] are daily in my thoughts, you need not doubt, but as much as I love & regard you both, I cannot allow my self to wish me with you till the expedition is finished knowing that it would Sink me in your esteem & that you would dispise a wretch that could desert an honourable Cause, a Cause undertaken for the Good of his Country in general and more immediately for the Protection of his Family as included among the Frontier settlers. let thoughts like these Animate you and support your Spirits and remember my Dr Girl that the Divine Being is ominipresent as well as Omnipotent . . . therefor My Dr. think me as safe on this expedition tho we should have a skirmish or two with the Indians as if at home and should it be the will of God that I should fall, I must & can not otherwise think but that he who dies in the

Service of & in the defense of his Country dies in a Act of Religion and circumstances considered dies the death of the Rightious."[43]

Anne received no further word from her husband until after the battle of Point Pleasant and then she learned that he had been wounded, though not mortally. William himself wrote her a sanitized account of the battle and his wounds on October 13. By November 4, he still had not returned to Botetourt County. A condescending government official replied to Anne's inquiry about her husband that "certainly you know your duty well enough to Resign Yrself in all Conditions." Surely William would appear in a few days, and he reminded Anne, "Remember the first Duty you owe Yr God in all circumstances is THY WILL BE DONE."[44]

William Fleming's letters to his wife reveal much about the impact of the Virginia frontier on men, women, and the relationships between them. One can infer that Anne felt anxious about the Indian threat both for herself and for William. But his continued efforts to reassure her may be read as attempts to reassure himself, too. His appeal to duty in the letter of September 27 may represent an acceptable masculine way of dealing with the fear and uncertainty that he could not address directly.

The paternalistic tone of William's letters and those of the governmental official should not overshadow what the letters reveal about Anne's abilities and activities. Her

husband kept her informed of troop movements and expressed faith in her competence to manage affairs at Belmont. Like Susanna Preston, Anne Fleming's elite status entitled her to guards, and Belmont functioned as a temporary garrison for kin and possibly neighbors. Fleming exercised some authority in determining just who would guard her. But while the prerogative of class afforded Fleming the advantages of guards and fortification, the obligations of class required her to stay put, even in times of danger.

Backcountry women continued to cope competently with the disruptions of war during the American Revolution. In 1776 the Holston River settlers faced the threat of war with the Indians. William Campbell, serving as an officer in the Continental Army at Williamsburg, wrote to his mother at his estate Aspenvale on the Holston, "I am convinced that everything must be in the greatest Confusion [with] you as such a number of People have collect[ed] at that place. I hope you will be cautious of exposing yourself. I know you are some times too regardless of danger; do not be so now." He expected that "some men" would be stationed with his mother, "which may at least be a means of saving your crop. It was fortunate for you a fort was built there." He asserted that when "the men" went upon their expedition peace would be restored in her neighborhood and suggested that Margaret Campbell sell cattle to the commissary of the troops as a way of converting goods to cash.[45] Two days

later, on August 18, Campbell confided to his wife Elizabeth Henry Campbell, that he hoped his mother and sisters would "be prudent enough not to expose themselves to danger." [46]

No response from Margaret Campbell to her son survives, but his concern with influencing her behavior to insure her safety suggests that she was a decisive and perhaps (from his perspective) stubborn woman. When her husband Charles died in 1767, he had left Margaret Campbell residuary legatee to all his lands (after leaving one tract each to his son and four daughters) and all his personal estate. She received the estate "at [her] Discretion or Pleasure to hold Occupy sell and dispose off as she shall see Cause." He also appointed her sole executor with the power to "make titles in fee simple for such lands as she will sell or give off in as full and ample a manner as circumstances will require." She accepted executorship, and although her son, a minor when the will was written, was of age by the time of his father's death in 1767, she did not renounce executorship in his favor.[47]

Margaret Campbell and her son William jointly oversaw and executed their move from Beverley Manor to Holston River in 1772. In May of that year William went ahead to begin fencing the fields, planting a crop, and evicting two families of squatters from the land. Margaret temporarily remained behind to organize the household and sell such goods as could not be transported.[48]

By the time of the battle of Long Island Flats at Holston River in 1776, Margaret Campbell had already lived through more than thirty years of sporadic frontier warfare. Her son's concern that she would ignore his advice implies that she thought she could take care of herself and her daughters.

Pressure from Indians on families in the New and Holston River valleys continued throughout the 1770s. In 1777-78 the Virginia Council empowered William Preston to keep a Sergeant and twelve men at Smithfield to "enable him to continue at his habitation and to encourage others to do so." In July 1778, Edward Johnson again encouraged his brother-in-law to remove his family to safety, adding that "my wife is uneasie & blames you much for running the many risks you have and is of Opinion that you'll continue till some of your family get Butchered or you lose your own life with these Mercyless Neighbors, I hope her fears (which are the Effects of a tender regard) for your Family may prove forever gr[oun]dless."[49]

The following month Susanna Preston, left in charge of Smithfield, wrote to inform her husband of affairs at the estate. She noted that neither of the tenants on two outlying farms had finished their Meadows, and she informed "Dear Billey" that James Daizell had "quit his service." An earlier letter from Preston to his wife suggests that he expected her both to keep him apprised of "household"

affairs and to carry out his plans in the manner of a good deputy, although he left much to her discretion.[50]

Elizabeth Campbell, the wife of William, demonstrated the extent to which the duties of a second in command could be carried on without explicit authorization when she opened a letter from General Nathanael Greene to her husband. After reading the letter, she forwarded it to her husband at the Montgomery County court house. Because he failed to connect with the messenger before returning home, he relied instead on his wife's account of the contents.[51]

The wounds he had received at Point Pleasant prevented William Fleming from fighting in the American Revolution, but he remained active in government service in ways that led to frequent absences from home. From May 1777 through October 1779 Fleming represented Botetourt, Washington, and Montgomery counties in the Virginia State Senate, and in 1780 served as a member of the Council. In 1779 and 1782 he headed commissions in Kentucky to settle land claims and investigate public accounts. Fleming sat at the Danville Convention, in 1784, which later led to Kentucky statehood.[52] He returned again to Kentucky on private business in 1789. Throughout all, Anne Fleming oversaw Belmont.

While in Williamsburg in 1778, Fleming sent his wife news about the prices of corn and wheat. When he was in Kentucky in the winter of 1784-85, he relied on her to procure meat for the family and to oversee the replanting of

the peach orchard. In 1789 she oversaw the harvest of the tobacco crop.[53]

Fleming's letters from Kentucky periodically asked his wife for information on the payment of debts and accounts. On 11 January 1785, Anne wrote to her husband that the sheriff was distraining land all around them for the non-payment of taxes. She arranged the following week to settle with the sheriff for the cash part of their taxes.[54] Fleming also relied on his wife to route land papers between Kentucky and the land office in Richmond and to pay fees. In 1784 he enclosed a letter to a third party along with a decree from chancery setting aside an escheat on some of his Kentucky land and a caveat against another claimant. He wrote, "I have left the letter open that you may know the contents." William relied on Anne to convey the letter and to procure a duplicate of his grant from the land office before it expired. In 1789, he sent her a journal of his travels as well as a letter, so that she might get "some idea of my business."[55]

The Flemings' letters to and from Kentucky in the 1780s, especially from the Beargrass region, echo earlier fears about the Indians,[56] but they also hint at an additional worry caused by the uncertain state of post war economic affairs in Virginia. These same concerns figure prominently in the correspondence of Letitia (Lettice) Preston Breckinridge, eldest daughter of Elizabeth Preston.

Breckinridge's husband Robert, a militia captain and justice of the peace, died in 1772, leaving her in charge of five minor children and an estate worth more than L700. By 1780, Breckinridge's eldest son William was fighting Indians in the Northwest. The following year his younger brother James, age eighteen, joined Nathanael Greene's campaign in North Carolina. Between 1783 and 1785, Breckinridge's sons William, James, and John made a combined total of at least five trips to Kentucky and West Virginia.[57]

Lettice Breckinridge worried incessantly about the safety of her sons. In 1783 John wrote to his mother of a surveying expedition in the Guyandotte River Valley that "Indians have killed three hunters, within thirty miles of where we were" and at the site for which his companion was bound. In 1784 William wrote from the Beargrass region of Kentucky to reassure his mother. "I prize my life above Kentucky lands and shall take particular good care of myself upon all Occasions." In 1785, an acquaintance wrote to Breckinridge's nephew to "send word to your Ant Mrs. Breckinridge that her son William was Alive and Well when I left Kentucky." The following year Breckinridge herself wrote to her son John. "I have felt great uneasity of mind about my sons in Kenetty [Kentucky] since Heard of Poor Colo. Christian's Death I am very much concerned for the Famely those [sic] are all greatly Disstred [sic] I am affread that it will be the fait of some of my Dr sons to

fall into the hands of their Enemies." Later in the same year, she lamented, "I am much concered [sic] for my Boy Jammy & . . . is allmost out of hopes of [seeing] him for some time as there is Expedison [sic] going out against the Indians it is very Lucky [likely?] I shall never see [him again].[58]

An additional worry competed with Lettice Breckinridge's fear for her sons' safety in the mid-1780s, fear of economic collapse. By 1784, Breckinridge had successfully managed her family's economic affairs for a dozen years. In that year, however, she wrote to her son John, a delegate to the General Assembly in Richmond, that "it is out [of my] Power to send you one fartheing of Monmy [Money] as it is scarce and being under a necessity of purchasing graine for the faimily [sic]." The following month she wrote, "I am more Lestned [Lessened] for money then I evear was in my Life as I have no [____]ken nor Graene to sell." The situation grew worse before it got better. By 1786, Breckinridge complained, "my affears is in such a situation that I am at a Loss to Know how to act . . . I never was so Dissted [Distressed] in all my Life about Debt. I expect nothing but that some of my Property will be tacken and exposed to Publick sale." In another letter to John written during the same year, she signed herself "Your Desstred mother." [59]

Lettice Breckinridge and her estate successfully

weathered the stormy economic times of the 1780s. Her experience during those years, however, raises an important question. To what extent did the concerns and experiences of women of the western elite differ from those of their eastern counterparts?

Women living west of the Blue Ridge shared most of the same housewifely duties as their eastern counterparts. They produced clothing and preserved and prepared food (or, in the case of some elite women, oversaw these tasks) for their households. Sometimes these activities involved women in interactions with the wider economic world that lay beyond their own households. Mary Greenlee recalled that during the 1740s many families sold butter to Newcastle or Williamsburg to raise money for quitrents "and got also in return their salt, iron, &c." By the 1770s female family members exchanged patterns for clothing and shared abundant produce, especially cheese and fruit, with female relatives living in other households. In some cases separate households of extended kin cooperated in the making of clothing.[60]

Like eastern women, western women devoted much of their lives to bearing children and most of their time to rearing them. In the first twenty years of her marriage to the Reverend John Brown, Margaret Preston Brown bore at least eleven children. Letitia Breckinridge bore at least six children during her fourteen-year marriage to Robert

Breckinridge. Both women married later than was usual for eastern women of comparable status, Brown in her late twenties (27 or 28) and Breckinridge probably in her early thirties (29 to 32). Brown lost four children in infancy, and Breckinridge lost at least one. Anne Fleming suffered several miscarriages in the early years of her marriage. Both Breckinridge and Fleming complained of poor health off and on throughout their lives.[61]

Western women also were actively involved in rearing their own children and in caring for nieces and nephews. Both the Christian and Fleming families refused to leave children alone in the care of slaves and insisted that an adult relative also be present. All members of the western elite saw aunts, uncles and grandparents as suitable parental substitutes, and nieces and nephews spent considerable time in the homes of aunts or uncles as well as those of their parents.[62]

With the coming of the American Revolution, eastern and western women shared the experience of war. Eastern women probably came to know the uncertainty and anxiety that had been constant in the lives of western women for nearly four decades. They may also have learned to manage family farms when their husbands left home to fight.[63] Eastern and western women certainly shared the economic dislocations of the 1780s that accompanied and outlasted the war.

In addition to housewifery, motherhood, and the

American Revolution, eastern and western women shared the disadvantages of life under Virginia's restrictive legal system. Virginia statutory law adopted the Common Law doctrine of coverture, which severely curtailed the property rights of married women. Single women, whether widowed or never married, enjoyed the same property rights as men. The lives of Mary McDowell Greenlee, Catherine North Parke Mathews, Susanna Preston, Anne Christian, Anne Fleming, and Elizabeth Campbell illustrate, however, that the legal doctrine of coverture did not prevent some wives from gaining considerable knowledge of the economic assets and activities of their families or from periodically exercising delegated authority over them. Several of these women also moved with ease from a single to a married state and back again (sometimes repeatedly). The ease with which they made the transition suggests that while the strict legal restrictions of coverture cannot be ignored, neither can they simply be taken as descriptive of how women lived.[64] An examination of the lives of three widows belonging to the second generation speaks directly to this point.

Lettice Breckinridge, Susanna Preston, and Anne Fleming all married during the five years between 1758 and 1763. Breckinridge and Fleming were the children of Irish emigrants. Preston, the daughter of a Hanover County carpenter and tavern keeper, moved to the upper Valley after she married Breckinridge's brother, William Preston. Both

Breckinridge and Preston became widows in their forties, Fleming when she was somewhat older. All three found themselves left with minor children and, under the terms of their husbands wills, received significant discretionary authority to control family resources.

Robert Breckinridge died in 1772. His will left his wife Lettice a life interest in the couple's farm in Botetourt County along with all its profits and two slaves. She also received the use of a half dozen additional slaves during the minority of the couple's children. Robert did not name his wife executor, however. That task fell to her brother, William Preston.[65]

Throughout the first decade of her widowhood, Breckinridge made decisions that affected the economic welfare of her family. She sometimes consulted her brother for advice, but their correspondence indicates that she alone made final decisions. She also assisted Preston periodically by overseeing specific tasks at Greenfield, one of Preston's two plantations, located nearby. Breckinridge continued to operate an ordinary in her house, as she and her husband had done before his death. A succession of overseers supervised daily farm operations, but Breckinridge herself decided what to plant and when to market the crops.[66]

Between 1780 and 1784, Breckinridge's three eldest sons came of age; her brother died in 1783. Thereafter her son John purchased goods for his mother in Richmond and sent her

information on the prices of crops and goods. He also attempted to advise his mother on crops, but she generally ignored his advice. None of her sons interrupted their own educations or careers to manage their mother's estate.[67]

Breckinridge's letters from the 1780s, which expressed her anxiety over the state of her economic affairs, may have reflected lack of faith in her ability to function outside the domestic realm, or may simply have reflected fear in the face of the hard times of the 1780s. Another plausible explanation, however, is that Breckinridge, who had not been appointed one of her husband's executors, faced an unpredictable economic situation without sufficient power to manage debts. Only executors could sell assets--land, slaves, or livestock--to pay off the debts of the estate. Her brother's death left Breckinridge with uncertainty that she could influence the executor should the sale of assets become unavoidable. Finally, a letter from John Breckinridge written from Williamsburg in 1784 indicates that he believed it inappropriate for his mother to manage her own affairs. "The want of some person [man] to overlook your affairs & which I hear you have taken too great a share upon yourself with your anxiety of mind, has I am afraid rendered you very unhappy."[68]

Whatever her anxieties in the 1780s, Breckinridge proved distinctly more unhappy at the prospect of giving up the Botetourt County farm in 1792. In that year, in

preparation for moving to Kentucky, she signed a contract with her youngest son, Preston, who was to inherit the farm at her death. She gave up her life right to the farm in exchange for a life right in 300 acres on Elkhorn Creek near Lexington, Kentucky, where she could work her slaves.[69] One month later John Breckinridge wrote his mother, "I was sorry to see you so tenacious of your property, as to express a reluctance to dispose of it, when your ease and conveniency seemed to require it. You have had my opinion fully on the impropriety of undertaking in Kentucky the perplexity of a Plantation. Your Negroes I would endeavour to keep, but as to every thing else, it will answer no other purpose but to give you trouble & disquiet. Should you reach Kentucky in safety, the hire of your Negroes, & rent of your land, will far exceed any annual income you ever enjoyed, and be amply sufficient to support you genteely and independently." John Breckinridge reassured his mother that he was not advocating that she give up her independence or "diminish her capital." "A dependence on any person is uncomfortable & humiliating; to one of your disposition it would be intolerable." If she insisted on working her own plantation in Kentucky (and John Breckinridge conceded that the decision was his mother's alone to make), He hoped that she would live with one of her children or take a house in Lexington, as she could not turn a profit until after the first year of operation.[70]

Lettice Breckinridge worked her own plantation for a

year after moving to Kentucky. In 1794, however, she acceded to the demands of failing health and hired out her slaves. She never again established an independent household, but alternately resided with her son and her daughter until her death around the age of seventy in 1797.[71]

Breckinridge's sister-in-law, Susanna Preston, entered widowhood in 1783, at the age of forty-three, with ten children, only one of whom had reached majority. William Preston willed his wife the use and profits from all his plantations, slaves, and stock for the term of her widowhood, as well as her choice of either Smithfield or Greenfield for her independent residence. The timing and amount of slaves and livestock to be distributed among the couple's children was left to Susanna's discretion.[72]

Like Robert Breckinridge, however, William Preston did not include his wife among his executors. He named three friends and a kinsman to serve until his eldest sons, John and Francis, reached the ages of nineteen and twenty, respectively. John was nineteen when his father died and served as principal executor. Preston's executorial nomination coupled with repeated charges to sons John and Francis to assist their mother in rearing the younger children had the effect of dividing authority within the family. He saw his wife both as an authority figure within the family and, at least potentially, a dependent.[73]

Susanna Preston chose to live at Smithfield for the

next forty-one years. Although she apparently was not as actively involved in farming as her sister-in-law, Lettice Breckinridge, she gave orders and participated in the local economy. Until 1806 she also retained control of all of William Preston's forty-one slaves with the exception of "a negro [or] in some instances two" given to her children as they came of age.[74]

In that year the widow and children met to discuss the distribution of the estate, especially the slaves. Susanna Preston, now sixty-six years old, gave about fifteen slaves to William's heirs while retaining eighteen for herself. In 1812, Preston, then ill, considered giving up her plantation and hiring out her slaves but rejected the idea. In 1815, her son John wrote that his mother "has too much anxiety about her family & little concerns--no doubt her last indisposition was brought on by these means . . . . Her family of negroes is too large very inattentive & really an incumbrance to her." The following year Susanna Preston, now seventy-six years old, surrendered an additional eighteen slaves to her children. The recipients gave bond to purchase the slaves one year after Preston's death, but instead of paying interest on the bonds, they paid Preston an annual annuity. In spite of the encouragement of her children, however, Preston refused to leave her plantation to live with one of them. She died at Smithfield in 1823, at the age of eighty-three, possessed of seven slaves.[75]

Anne Fleming was one of Susanna Preston's neighbors before the Prestons left Greenfield in the 1760s. When William Fleming died in 1795, she was probably a decade or so older than Preston and Breckinridge had been at the time of their husbands' deaths. Like Robert Breckinridge and William Preston, Fleming left his wife a life estate in their farm, Belmont, (which had been her marriage portion) and all their slaves and livestock. He also left her discretionary authority to divide the slaves and stock among the couple's children in any way and at any time she chose; for, like the Prestons and the Breckinridges, the Flemings still had several minor children at the time of William's death. Finally, like William Preston and Robert Breckinridge, Fleming did not include his wife among his executors, but named instead his adult son Leonard, a Kentuckian, and three gentlemen of Botetourt County.[76]

During her widowhood Anne Fleming oversaw Belmont, raised wheat, and did business with local merchants. Unfortunately, shortly after 1800, she suffered crop failures in two successive years. Fleming had distantly monitored her late husband's Kentucky lands, often through her son-in-law, George Baxter, before falling into debt. After her economic reverses she stepped up her involvement in that aspect of the estate. Because Fleming was not an executor, she lacked the power to sell lands or to authorize that they be sold to raise money to pay the debts of the

estate,and her son Leonard proved impervious to his mother's needs. She wrote to old friends and neighbors from Virginia now living in Kentucky, initially asking them to prod Leonard into action and later in an attempt to circumvent him. She also tried to recover money from the estate of her brother, William Christian, who had served as her father's executor.[77] Anne never became destitute, but her husband's failure to make her one of his executors limited her ability to respond to economic hardship. She was dead by 1813, but the affair of the Kentucky lands dragged on among the Fleming heirs for more than a decade.[78]

Breckinridge, Preston, and Fleming all demonstrated a desire to control family property, and Breckinridge and Preston held on to it for as long as they could. Their husbands left their widows disadvantaged, however, by their unwillingness to name them executors, a position which carried with it the power to dispose of assets--land, slaves, or livestock--to pay debts. Breckinridge and Fleming felt this disadvantage most keenly, and it probably contributed to the anxiety that they expressed during periods of economic distress. Women of the second generation appear to have possessed a knowledge of the Virginia economy that equalled that of the immigrant generation, but the terms of their husbands' wills meant that Letitia Breckinridge, Susanna Preston, and Anne Fleming labored under difficulties that Elizabeth Preston, Mary

Greenlee, Catherine North Parke Mathews, and Margaret Campbell had not faced.

By denying their wives positions as executors, men limited their widows' ability to exercise control over property in the public realm. Nevertheless, life estates in farms, slaves, and stock meant that widows retained considerable power within the family. Discretionary ability to dispose of slaves among the heirs increased that internal authority. Appointment of adult sons as executors, combined with bequests that gave widows considerable power over family property, effectively divided authority within the family. Adult sons possessed public authority to represent the family; widows retained extensive internal authority over the distribution of family resources within the family.[79]

Robert Breckinridge, William Preston, and William Fleming saw their widows as occupying the same place after their deaths that their wives had occupied during their lifetime absences from home, that of chief authority within the family and steward for the family's property. The slowness with which estates were settled, in part because of the widows' life estate, reinforced the integrity of the conjugal family unit. The fact that husbands left their wives discretionary authority over the family and its property without leaving them open-ended control suggests that men wanted women to have the knowledge and ability to

function competently in all aspects of life when called upon to do so, but wanted men to control the terms under which they did so.[80]

The difficulties Elizabeth Campbell encountered illustrate what could happen when women attempted to challenge men's ability to control the terms of their authority. Elizabeth Henry married William Campbell, a member of the third generation of the elite of western Virginia, in 1776. William died in 1781, leaving Elizabeth with two minor children, three-year old Sarah and infant Charles. William bequeathed Elizabeth one-third of his personal estate, "her maintenance in such manner as she shall think proper out of profits arising from my estate," and a slave woman. More significantly, he also named her joint executor of his will along with his brother-in-law, Arthur Campbell, and a friend, William Christian. Only Elizabeth initially qualified as executor, giving bond for L2000, but Arthur Campbell and William Christian eventually joined her as co-executors.[81]

When she qualified as William's executor, Elizabeth also succeeded him as executor of the estate of his mother Margaret, who named William and Arthur Campbell as joint executors, and of his father Charles, of whose estate Margaret had been sole executor during her lifetime. Arthur Campbell precipitated a dispute over these two estates, tried to delay their settlement, and demanded that Elizabeth

turn over the papers to him. For her part, Elizabeth attempted to have the administration of the estates removed to her native Amherst County.[82]

In 1782 Elizabeth Campbell married William Russell, and Arthur Campbell succeeded in having himself appointed guardian (along with Elizabeth's brother-in-law William Christian) to Elizabeth's children Charles and Sarah. The battle between Elizabeth Russell and Arthur Campbell, this time for control over her children and their estates, intensified. William Christian died in 1786. In July 1787, Arthur seized Sarah, the only surviving child of Elizabeth Russell, and hid her. After summoning her husband to come and assist her, Elizabeth and her maid spent the night outside Campbell's house. He escaped with Sarah, and the Russells raised a hue and cry. While the county constable searched for Sarah, they appealed to Thomas Madison, another of Elizabeth's brothers-in-law, to intervene.[83]

A few days later Campbell offered to allow Sarah to "frequently visit or for sometime reside with her mother" if the Russells would agree that Campbell should manage Sarah's affairs without interference from William Russell. The Russells rejected the proposal. In spite of their rejection, however, nine-year-old Sarah appears to have resided with her mother until her marriage. Presumably the Russells' relations with Campbell remained chilly. In 1793, at the age of fourteen, Sarah Buchanan Campbell married

Francis Preston, second son of William and Susanna Preston.[84]

By remarrying, Elizabeth Campbell challenged patriarchal ideals about the nature of the family. While Lettice Breckinridge, Susanna Preston, and Anne Fleming continued to serve as stewards or delegates of their deceased husbands, Elizabeth Campbell by her remarriage had obliterated the possibility of serving as deputy to a dead man. She had, in effect, pledged her loyalty to a new principal. Whatever Arthur Campbell's motivations in challenging Russell, her remarriage provided him with the perfect opportunity to do so under Virginia's patriarchal legal structure.

Virginia patriarchy, however, did not leave women without recourse either by law or through informal social sanctions. When a patriarch abdicated his responsibilities, people attempted to protect his family from the worst effects of it. The life of Mary Howard shows how both legal and social constraints could provide women with recourse against the worst abuses of the system.

Elizabeth Preston's youngest daughter Mary married John Howard of Goochland County in 1764. By the early 1770s Howard encountered financial difficulties. By the middle of the decade, he was insolvent.[85] Mary Howard's troubles did not end with her husband's distressed financial state, however. In November 1779, the Botetourt County Court inquired into the condition of the mind of John Howard, "who

is supposed to have been for some time past in a State of Insanity." The court found him insane, ordered "that his estate ought to be taken out of his Management and placed in the hands of trustees . . . and that he ought to be sent to the publick hospital." In August of the following year, Howard produced a supersidias from the High Court of Chancery directing the Botetourt County justices to grant him an appeal. When Howard failed to give security before the court, the matter appears to have been dropped.[86]

During the same month, August 1780, Howard physically abused his wife so severely that William Fleming, the physician called to attend her, feared for her life. When William and his wife Anne arrived, Lettice Breckinridge was with her injured sister. All that Mary Howard would admit was that John Howard had seized her by the nose and dragged her to the door. Her nose had bled off and on throughout the night and she was weak, inclined to fainting, and vomiting blood. Fleming also noted bleeding from Mary Howard's ears and suspected that she had received a severe blow to the head, although neither of the Howards admitted such an occurrence. While the Flemings treated Mary, John railed at Lettice Breckinridge and tried to justify the beating. He shouted that "he was determined never to bear with any more insults--that He would be Master in his own house And keep a proper subordination &c."[87]

Fleming remained with Mary Howard until the following

evening, when he left her with another doctor. Then he wrote to her brother that she could not survive if forced to remain under the same roof with her husband. He also expressed concern for the couple's children and noted that John Howard "now feeds them all on baked Rye, as it comes from the threshing floor, The bearding thick in it. I have seen some of it as dressed for the Table. it is only fit for Hogs." Fleming hoped that William Preston would help his sister sue for a separate maintenance, "which I think she seems inclined to do," although he feared that John Howard would deprive her of the children.[88]

Despite the danger, Mary and John Howard maintained a joint residence for the rest of their lives. John spent considerable time elsewhere, however. He also made several extended visits to Kentucky before the couple moved there permanently between 1788 and 1792.[89]

Mary Howard assumed increasing responsibility for the family's finances, including the recovery of debts due to her husband. For eight years she also refused to relinquish her dower right in part of her husband's Amherst County lands. In 1783, the purchaser, Thomas Anderson wrote to her nephew, John Preston, to ask him to persuade his Aunt to relinquish her dower. In 1787, Mary Howard advised her nephews John Breckinridge and John Brown, who served as her attorneys in the matter that "I cannot express the destress this affair has already giving [sic] me; I have already

rode above five hundred mills in the Extreamety of the winter, in order to get mr. Anderson to settle it but all to no perpose--he would do nothing. I am now willing if you thinke it is the best way to settle the affair by Arbitraters." The following year Mary Howard finally relinquished her dower.[90]

In the dozen years following her beating, Mary Howard viewed her husband with a mixture of pity and resignation. In 1784, she noted that "poor mr. Howard has kept the plot of his Elk [Creek?] land in his pockett till juist a few days ago I have sent it by the bearer and begs the favor of you to put in the office if the time is out." In 1787 she wrote to her nephew John Brown, "Mr Howard informs me that he left all his papers relating to Wolders land with Mr. Worldly to give to you. I hope dear friend that you will do all in your power to get back the land or make him make good his bargain to Mr. Howard." Finally in 1788, as she was preparing to move her family to Kentucky, John Howard returned from that place to the couple's home in Virginia. Mary Howard lamented, "The author of all my distress was at a distance and did not expect he would return before I would get off this place." When a letter from Breckinridge arrived the same day containing information that precluded the move, Mary Howard complained that she "had now sixteen of a family to provide for" and little means of doing so.[91]

The law could not prevent John Howard from taking his

family to the brink of economic disaster, but his wife did not find herself entirely without recourse. Mary Howard's dower right gave her some leverage in bargaining with Anderson. Although she apparently did not choose to avail herself of the legal remedy of separate maintenance, her husband's insolvency and the community's knowledge of his unsound (or at least unstable) mental state offered her some protection. Her nephews and several local merchants clearly conspired with her to protect the family from the worst effects of Howard's failings.[92] In the eyes of the community a patriarch who abdicated his responsibilities (whatever the reason), also abdicated some of his rights.

The experiences of Mary Howard and Elizabeth Campbell, combined with the failure of the husbands of Lettice Breckinridge, Susanna Preston, and Anne Fleming to name them executors, suggest that by the 1780s Virginian's patriarchal legal system may have exerted greater influence on second and third[93] generation women than it had on their immigrant mothers and grandmothers. Limited evidence also suggests that social constraints on women's roles also increased. By this time "ladies" did not travel unaccompanied (if avoidable), and male relatives handled transactions in stores or in court whenever possible, even if their orders came from women.[94] John Breckinridge's belief that it was inappropriate for his mother to handle the financial affairs of the family without "some person [man] to overlook" them

reinforces this interpretation. The experiences of some of the third generation of elite western women add strength to the argument.

The Third Generation

Members of the third generation probably possessed greater educational advantages than did their mothers. Clearly all the members of the second generation discussed here had mastered the basic skills of reading and writing, although with varying degrees of proficiency. Even among the Preston sisters, levels of literacy varied. Mary Howard articulated her sentiments fully and wrote in a clear hand. Her sister Lettice created an almost indecipherable scrawl, omitted words, and sometimes substituted one word for another with an entirely different meaning. As her son William noted (unnecessarily, for anyone who has struggled to read her script), "I know that you dislike writing very much." The clarity of expression in Anne Fleming's letters varied; letters to family members were often hastily scrawled, but business letters were carefully composed.[95]

Many women of the second generation read, either for pleasure or edification. Anne Fleming and Anne Christian exchanged religious books. Lettice Breckinridge read the Bible. William Preston left his library of 273 volumes to his sons, "except such as my wife may choose to keep for the

use of herself & my daughters." The diarist Philip Fithian recalled of Margaret Preston Brown that she was not "unacquainted with Books & Science --But of these she makes no Boast & only uses them as Helps in every other Part of her Discourse."[96]

Parents of the third generation expressed concern for the education of their daughters as well as their sons. Apparently boys and girls sometimes shared the same tutor and took lessons together. Anne Fleming sent her daughter to live with her brother and his wife after they engaged a private tutor for their children. Betsy Brown, eldest daughter of the erudite Margaret and her husband the Reverend John Brown, who kept a school near Lexington, Virginia, read both Latin classics and English authors. Although born too soon to benefit from the establishment of educational institutions for girls in the upper Valley, the educations of the third generation included far more than housewifery and dancing.[97]

Elizabeth (Eliza) Preston, eldest child of William and Susanna Preston, was born into this privileged third generation. In 1779, at the age of sixteen, Eliza married William Strother Madison. He died of smallpox three years later, and his wife found herself a widow before the age of twenty. Eliza never remarried but continued to live on the couple's farm and to manage her own business affairs for the rest of her life. In doing so she left a written record

that reveals her understanding of the Virginia land system and the operation of the law, as well as the basic tenets of plantation management.[98]

In addition to managing her own business affairs, Eliza Madison ventured opinions in politics, a realm with which her mother and aunts appear to have had only a passive acquaintance. When her brother Francis faced a difficult election in 1797, Madison warned another brother about [Arthur?] Campbell's attempt to manipulate the election in her county. She also noted the freeholders' disgust at her brothers' attempt to engage in a similar manipulation in a preceding election. She advised them that if they tried the same strategy again they should not "make it known until on the day of the election as the example was set by the opposite party it could not be a subject of Reproach to you." Madison justified expressing such strong opinions on political strategy by appealing to a sense of familial duty. "I hope you'll pardon my appearing so engaged in a business which I candidly acknowledge out of my sphere but I feel myself actuated by motives which I flatter myself will admit of excuse . . . In the first place the warmth of my affection interest me, and secondly the horrible detestation I have to see . . . such Assassins of Reputation gnawing at the dearest parts of my friends."[99]

Madison's sister-in-law and Francis Preston's wife, Sarah Campbell Preston (Elizabeth Campbell Russell's

daughter), also expressed strong opinions concerning the practical aspects of politics. Preston claimed that her husband lost his election because of "reports put in circulation by [James] Meek & industriously propogated by him & his emissarys." "On looking over the polls," however, she was pleased to note "that every respectable well informed citizen voted for him [her husband] & that he still possesses the confidence of the worthy part of the community."[100]

Both Madison and Preston confined their expression of political views to members of their own families. Madison wrote to her brother, Preston to her brother-in-law. Both wrote in a society that increasingly circumscribed the limits of appropriate behavior for "ladies". In 1793 Madison asked her cousin James Breckinridge to transact some business at court concerning a disputed land survey for her. In 1800 she "begged" her brother John personally to pay a debt for her. In 1805 she wrote to ask him to oversee the sale of certain lands for her, noting that "I fully intended to ask the favour of you . . . but your conversation taken [i.e. taking] a different turn before you left the house prevented my making the request." The remark suggests that Madison considered it inappropriate for her to shift the topic of conversation.[101]

Not all of Eliza Madison's sisters and sisters-in-law possessed the same knowledge of business affairs that she

did, but some came close. In 1817, Ann T. Preston, wife of Madison's brother James Patton Preston, forcefully negotiated the purchase of a slave woman with her brother-in-law. Preston took the action herself after her husband had failed to act. Similarly, Mary Preston Lewis seized the initiative and wrote to her brother-in-law concerning the division of her mother's slaves, noting that her husband's "aversion" to writing was "very great and the subject is not a pleasant one." Whether these married women could have acted so boldly with men from outside their own families remains unknown, but their need to explain their behavior suggests that it may have been considered exceptional.[102]

One final piece of evidence supports the notion that the kinds of behavior deemed socially acceptable for elite women narrowed after the Revolution. Later commentators on the activities of earlier generations of women saw these women as exceptional because they took on roles perceived as masculine. In 1843, Letitia Preston Floyd, the youngest daughter of William and Susanna Preston, referred to her grandmother, Elizabeth Preston (whom she had never known personally), as a woman of "masculine understanding" and "great ambition." At about the same time that Floyd was writing, a correspondent of Lyman Draper remarked that Elizabeth Campbell Russell "had a beard and shaved like a man." John Lewis Peyton, chronicler of Augusta County, claimed in the 1880s that Mary Greenlee's neighbors thought

she was a witch. Peyton did not give the date of the original accusation, but himself maintained that Greenlee was a "woman of more than ordinary brightness and vivacity of intellect but many aberrations of mind and eccentricities of character and conduct."[103]

Virginia patriarchy as it existed west of the Blue Ridge did not deny elite women knowledge of the wider economic and legal world in which family business was conducted, but men tried to control the conditions under which women used their knowledge. Several factors combined to give women of the first and second generations the opportunity both to acquire knowledge of family affairs and to use it frequently. The commercial heritage of the immigrant elite may have predisposed them to accord women a more active role in the general economic affairs of the family than did eastern Virginia planters. Certainly some women of the immigrant generation possessed considerable knowledge of family business interests and ample opportunities to apply that knowledge. The extent to which the second generation also proved competent and capable managers suggests that the circumstances of frontier life, which required the frequent and extended absences of men, helped to keep this tradition alive. Some eastern women who had married into the western elite, as well as women born into it, followed the tradition of the active wife which

their mothers and mothers-in-law established.[104]

During the period immediately following the American Revolution, western men began to place greater restrictions on the terms under which women could make use of their knowledge. Some second generation widows--Lettice Breckinridge, Susanna Preston, and Anne Fleming--found themselves caught in the transition. By the time that women of the third generation began to come of age, social constraints on appropriate behavior for elite women increasingly made themselves felt. The frontier now lay beyond the Appalachian mountains and more settled conditions prevailed in the upper Shenandoah Valley and southwestern Virginia. The passing of the frontier, the experience of the war for independence, and the changing occupational structure of men in the third generation, all contributed to a narrowing of women's roles, which is explored more fully in chapter four. In spite of this constriction in the kinds of activities deemed appropriate for elite women, however, several women of the third generation appear to have shared their mothers' and grandmothers' working knowledge of family business.

NOTES

1. The three generations include (first) the immigrant generation, (second) the daughters of the immigrant generation or the wives of their sons, some of whom came from east of the Blue Ridge, and (third) the daughters of the second generation and the wives of their sons.

No separate history of the women who settled the Virginia backcountry exists, although their stories have proved compelling enough to produce a novel and a forged diary. Suzanne Lebsock, "A Share of Honour": Virginia Women, 1600-1945 (Richmond: Virginia Women's Cultural History Project, 1984), pp. 33-36 and Gregory H. Nobles, "Breaking into the Backcountry: New Approaches to the Early American Frontier," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 46 (1989): 649-650. Nelly C. Preston, Paths of Glory: A Simple Tale of A Far-Faring Bride, Elizabeth, Sister of Patrick Henry (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1961) is the novel, Fannie Fielding, "The Commonplace Book of Margaret Lynn Lewis," reprint ed. (Salem, Va.: Times Register, 1940), the forgery. On the forgery, see also Mary Beth Norton, "Letter to the Editor," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 33 (1976): 715-717.

2. Cf. David Hackett Fischer, Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 669-683; and James G. Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish: A Social History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), pp. 148-149 and 263.

3. For England, the classic work on this subject is Alice Clark, The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1919), which postulates a declining role for women in economic affairs in the eighteenth century. But see also Margaret George, Women in the First Capitalist Society (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), especially chapter 2, "The Useful Ladies, 'Gentlewomen and Tradesmens Wives,'"pp. 37-52; and Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 25, especially note 34.

On the role of women in family mercantile business, see the letters of Walter Lutwidge, Whitehaven merchant, to his sister Ellinor Warren in Dublin concerning the purchase of linen, 5 October, 3 November, 12 November, and 20 December 1740 and 6 January 1740/41, Walter Lutwidge Letterbook, microfilm, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, Virginia. On the role of an English merchant's wife in collecting a debt due her husband's firm,

see Deposition of Allexander Erchard, 18 March 1685, Corporation of London Records Office, MCD/39. I am indebted to Linda Sturtz for this reference.

On the widows of Philadelphia craftsmen, shopkeepers, and merchants, see Lisa Wilson Waciega, "A 'Man of Business': The Widow of Means in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1750-1850," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 45 (1987): 49-54. On commercialism generally in southeastern Pennsylvania, see James T. Lemon, The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1972).

4. On the commercial character of the Shenandoah Valley generally, see Robert D. Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977).

5. John Frederick Dorman, The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia (Louisville, Kentucky: The Filson Club, 1982), pp. 1-3. Patricia Givens Johnson, William Preston and the Allegheny Patriots (Pulaski, Va.: B.D. Smith & Bros., Printers, Inc., 1976), p. 2. Family tradition suggests that Elizabeth Preston married beneath herself when she married the shipwright John Preston; see Letitia Preston Floyd to her son Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 February 1843, typescript in Preston Family Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, microfilm. Letitia Floyd (b. 1779) was Elizabeth Preston's granddaughter and William Preston's daughter. She was born three years after Elizabeth Preston died. Floyd's letter was written in response to an inquiry from Lyman Draper to her son concerning material for a proposed work, "Sketches of the Pioneers."

John Preston, Affidavit regarding immigration of himself and his family to Virginia, Augusta County Order Book 1, p.4, certified copy in Preston Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society (hereafter cited as VHS), Richmond.

6. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 3-4; Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 February 1843; and John Craig, Record of Baptisms, 1740-1749, Virginia State Library, Richmond, photocopy.

7. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 3-4; Administration bond of Elizabeth Preston, 19 February 1747/48, Augusta County Will Book 1, pp. 72-73. John Preston died intestate, and I have located no inventory of his estate; but administrators in Virginia usually gave bond for double the value of the decedent's estate. On the family tradition, see Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 February 1843.

8. Elizabeth Preston, account with John Madison, Clerk, Augusta County Court, February 1749-January 1750; Elizabeth Preston, bond to William Beverley, 2 September 1749 with an account of John Preston's debt to Beverley on the verso, 1746; and William Preston, Account with the Government of Virginia, July 1755; all in Preston Family Papers, VHS, box 1. See also Robert McClanachan, sheriff, receipt to Elizabeth Preston, 10 July 1749, Preston Family Papers-Moore Collection, box 1, Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg.

9. Dorman, Prestons, p.5, and Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 February 1843. Floyd states that James Patton induced her grandmother to move to Staunton to facilitate the education of her son and his employment as his uncle's secretary. While proximity to her brother was probably one factor in Preston's decision to move, later historians of the family (taking their cue from Floyd) have tended to overemphasize the extent to which Patton took care of his sister. Patton's will left nothing directly to his sister, although she was conditional legatee, after the failure of at least five other heirs, to four tracts of land and two slaves. Will of James Patton, Preston Papers, Draper Collection 1 QQ 63, (microfilm edition) State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

On the linen embroidery business, see Johnson, William Preston, p. 9, and Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 February 1843. On the loan, see William Preston, bond to Letitia Preston, 7 September 1754, Preston Family Papers, VHS. Information on the store accounts is contained in ibid., Box 1, folders 4, 202, 235, 265, and 373. Elizabeth Preston also maintained her own store accounts; see, for example, Elizabeth Preston account with John Howard, 1767-1769, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as LC), Washington, D.C.

10. [The Reverend] John Brown to William Preston, [1764], Draper Collection 2 QQ 50; John Brown, Memoranda of Preston Family, Orlando Brown Papers, Filson Club, Louisville, Ky. Johnson, William Preston, pp. 77, 130, and 196; Dorman, Prestons, p. 5. See also, Robert Townsend, bond to William Preston, 7 February 1772, Preston Family Papers, VHS, Box 3. Quotation is from Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 February 1843. Grandson Francis Preston, Letitia Floyd's elder brother who was eleven years old when Elizabeth Preston died, remembered his grandmother as "a well looking sensible old Lady," Francis Preston, Memorandum Book, 1833, Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection, Filson Club.

11. Thomas Marshall Green, Historic Families of Kentucky (1889; reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1975), pp. 2-3, identifies Ephraim McDowell's wife as Margaret Irvine and states that family tradition claims McDowell's wife died in Ireland. In Greenlee's deposition dated 10 November 1802, she gives her age as 95 the "17th instant." Chalkley, Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, 1745-1800, (1912; reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1966)2:274. On the migration to Virginia, see Mary McDowell Greenlee, deposition, 10 November 1806, published in William Couper, History of the Shenandoah Valley (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1952)1:274-277. A recorded copy of the deposition survived in the Augusta County Courthouse, Staunton, Virginia, at the turn of the century. See Chalkley, Chronicles, 2:268.

12. Greenlee, deposition, 10 November 1806, pp. 274, 276-277.

13. Greenlee, deposition, 10 November 1806, pp. 274-277. For a general discussion of the land settlement system and its implications for society in the Virginia backcountry, see Turk McCleskey, "Rich Land, Poor Prospects: Real Estate and the Formation of a Social Elite in Augusta County, Virginia, 1738-1770." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 98 (1990): 449-486. Greenlee's role in determining where the couple would live differed from that of second and third generation women in Kentucky, who report waiting for their husbands to tell them where they would live. Cf. Mary Christian Trigg to Elizabeth Christian [1782], and Sarah W. Warfield to Anne Fleming, 13 May 1794, both in William Fleming Papers (hereafter cited as Fleming Papers), Washington and Lee University Library, Lexington, Va.

14. Chalkley, Chronicles, vol. 3, p. 76; quotation is from Green, Historic Families, p. 10.

15. Chalkley, Chronicles, vol.1, pp. 186 and 399. The story of North's travels is revealed in her letters to George Davis, 1776-1785, Stuart-Baldwin Papers, Alderman Library. On Philadelphia merchants generally, see Thomas M. Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986).

16. Catherine North to George Davis, 10 September 1776, Stuart-Baldwin Papers.

17. Catherine North to George Davis, 24 October 1776, ibid.

18. Catherine North to George Davis, 10 December 1776, ibid.

19. Catherine North to George Davis, 7 February 1777, ibid.

20. Chalkley, Chronicles, 1:399; Catherine Parke to George Davis, 29 December 1778, Stuart-Baldwin Papers.

21. Chalkley, Chronicles, 1:399. Sampson Mathews was the eldest son of Betsy Ann Archer and John Mathews, Irish emigrants who settled in present-day Rockbridge County around 1737. G. Melvin Herndon, "George Mathews, Frontier Patriot," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 77 (1969):307-308 and 310. On Sampson Mathews's career, see Chalkley, Chronicles, 1:190, and Joseph A. Waddell, Annals of Augusta County, Virginia, From 1726 to 1871, 2nd ed. (Bridgewater, Va.: C. J. Carrier Company, 1902), pp. 309-310. The marriage was probably the second one for Sampson Mathews; see ibid. Sampson Mathews to George Davis, 20 May 1785, and Catherine Mathews to George Davis, 20 May 1785, Stuart-Baldwin Papers.

22. Ibid.

23. Chalkley, Chronicles, 1:190, 374, 379, 385; 2:9; and 3:589.

24. Catherine North to George Davis, 24 October 1776, Stuart-Baldwin Papers.

25. Chalkley, Chronicles, 1:394-395; Sampson Mathews to Archibald Stuart, 22 May, 30 May, and 8 June 1790, Stuart-Baldwin Papers. Catherine's petition for divorce is not among Legislative Petitions, Richmond City and Augusta County, Virginia State Library.

26. For a broad exposition of this argument, see Roger Thompson, Women in Stuart England and America (Boston: Routhledge & Kegan Paul, 1974)). See also, Edmund Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1975), pp. 165-170, and Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Planter's Wife: The Experience of White Women in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 34 (1977): 542-571.

27. Lists of tithables survive for Augusta, Montgomery, and Botetourt counties in the 1770s, but only white men above the age of sixteen and black slaves (both

men and women) were considered tithables. White women appear only as widowed heads of households.

Sex ratios were calculated for the upper Shenandoah Valley (including Augusta, Rockbridge, and Botetourt counties), southwestern Virginia (including Montgomery, Russell and Washington counties), and the four piedmont towns based on figures in the U.S. Census Office, Return of the Whole Number of Persons . . . [1790] (Washington, D.C.: William Duane, 1802), pp. 44-45. Modern demographers consider a sex ratio of 95-102 "typical" and anything outside 90-105 "extreme." See Henry S. Shryock, Jacob S. Siegal, et al., The Methods and Materials of Demography (New York: Academic Press, 1976), pp. 106-107.

28. List of Souls in Botetourt County, 1782, VSL, includes families from Captain Smith's and Captain Mills' militia companies. I have no way of knowing whether or not young men who may have been away from home fighting in the Revolutionary war were omitted from this list. On the initial migration in families, see Carl Bridenbaugh, Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South (New York: Atheneum, 1972), pp. 135-136; Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, pp. 53-54; and Fischer, Albion's Seed, p. 610.

29. The Indian threat appears to have been a genuine one and not a construct of the settlers' imaginations [Matthew Ward, work in progress, private communication with the author]. While women on the Virginia frontier may have suffered from a higher level of anxiety than their eastern counterparts, I have found no evidence of the depression and loneliness so common among the women who settled the trans-Mississippi west, especially the great plains. See Julie Roy Jeffrey, Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1880 (New York: Hill and Wange, 1979).

30. Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, pp. 36-37; and James Patton to the Governor of Virginia, 2 July 1754, Preston Family Papers box 1, VHS.

31. Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, pp. 16-17; Gary B. Nash, Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America, 2nd ed., (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982), pp. 248-251 and 254-255.

32. James Patton to the Governor of Virginia, 2 July 1754, Preston Family Papers, box 1, VHS; and William Preston to Edward Johnson, 2 August 1774, ibid., box 3.

33. James Patton to the Governor of Virginia, 2 July 1754, Preston Family Papers, box 1, VHS; Waddell, Annals of Augusta County, pp. 121 and 309; Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 February 1843; F.B. Kegley, Kegley's

Virginia Frontier: The Beginning of the Southwest [and] the Roanoke of Colonial Days, 1740-1783 (Roanoke: Southwest Virginia Historical Society, 1938), p. 210; and Edward Johnson to William Preston, 2 July 1774, box 3, Preston Family Papers, VHS.

34. John Brown to William Preston [1764], Preston Papers, Draper Collection, 2 QQ 50. See also John Brown to William Preston, 8 [June] 1764, ibid., 2 QQ 49.

35. John Brown to William Preston, 28 May 1774, ibid., 3 QQ 29, and Dorman, Prestons, p. 63.

36. Edward Johnson to William Preston, 2 July 1774, and William Preston to Edward Johnson, 2 August 1774, box 3, Preston Family Papers, VHS.

37. Susanna Preston was the daughter of a prosperous carpenter and tavern keeper, Francis Smith, and his wife Elizabeth (Waddy) Smith, of Hanover County, Virginia. Family tradition claims she met Preston when he engaged her father to build a meeting house for the Anglicans in Augusta County. Susanna Smith married William Preston on 17 January 1761. See Letitia Preston Floyd to her son Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 February 1843, and Dorman, Prestons, p. 13.

38. Quotation is from Annie Christian, at Captain Meredith's, to Anne Fleming, Botetourt, 3 October 1774, Fleming Papers. But see also Annie Christian, Scotchtown, to Anne Fleming, Botetourt, 15 October 1774, and Annie Christian to William Fleming, n.d., in ibid.

39. "Local History. Biographical Sketch of Israel Christian," Fincastle Herald, 18 June 1874, Draper Collection, 5 ZZ 104; and "William Fleming," in Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931)6:461.

40. William Fleming, Union Camp on the Levels, Gr[een] B[rier], to Anne Fleming, Botetourt, 4 September 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Collection, 2 ZZ 1.

41. William Fleming wrote two letters to his wife on 7 September 1774, see Draper Collection, 2 ZZ 2 and 2 ZZ 3. Quotations from 2 ZZ 3.

42. William Fleming, Union Camp, to Anne Fleming, 9 September 1774, ibid., 2 ZZ 4.

43. William Fleming to Anne Fleming, 27 September 1774, ibid., 2 ZZ 5.

44. John Madison to Anne Fleming [1774]. For two accounts by Fleming of the battle and his wounds, cf. William Fleming to Anne Fleming, 13 October 1774, and William Fleming to William Bowyer [13 October 1774]. All in ibid., 2 ZZ 9, 2 ZZ 6, and 2 ZZ 7. Quotation is from Ad. Smyth to Mrs. [Anne] Fleming, 4 November 1774, Fleming Papers.

45. William Campbell, Williamsburg, to Margaret Campbell, 14 August 1776, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, LC. On the Indian threat, see also Arthur Campbell to [William Campbell] 12 June 1776, ibid.

46. W[illiam] C[ampbell] to Elizabeth Campbell, 18 August 1776, ibid.

47. Will of Charles Campbell, 24 August 1761, proved 1767, ibid. On William Campbell's age, see John Lewis Peyton, History of Augusta County, Virginia, 2d ed. (Bridgewater, Va., 1953), pp. 307-308, and Waddell, Annals of Augusta County, pp. 147.

48. William Campbell, Aspen Bottom, to Margaret Campbell, South River, Augusta, 1 May 1772, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers.

49. Transcript from Virginia Council Journal, 1777-1778, p. 251, and Edward Johnson to William Preston, 2 July 1778, both in Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS. Johnson's mention of the loss of Preston's own life "with these Mercyless Neighbors" probably refers to the activities of so-called tories in Montgomery county. See Emory G. Evans, "Trouble in the Backcountry: Disaffection in Southwest Virginia during the American Revolution," in Ronald Hoffman, Thad W. Tate, and Peter J. Albert, eds., An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985), pp. 189-191.

50. Susanna Preston to William Preston, 29 August 1778, Preston Family Papers (Mss 1 P9267a), section 3, VHS, and William Preston, Fort Henry, to Susanna Preston, 9 July 1777, McDowell Family Papers, VHS as quoted in Johnson, William Preston, pp. 198-199.

51. William Campbell to [?], 7 February 1781, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, vol. 2.

52. "William Fleming," in DAB, 6:461.

53. William Fleming to Anne Fleming, 30 October 1778, 4 November 1784, 3 December 1784, and 3 December 1789, Fleming Papers.

54. William Fleming to Anne Fleming, 15 December 1779, 19 and 20 April 1780, 21 September 1784, and Anne Fleming to William Fleming, 11 January 1785, all in ibid.

55. William Fleming to Anne Fleming, 19 and 20 April 1780, 3 and 22 December 1784, and 3 December 1789, and Anne Fleming to William Fleming, 11 January 1785. First quotation is in 22 December 1784; second quotation is in 3 December 1789. All in ibid. On Anne Fleming's fear that her husband might lose his Beargrass lands, see Stephen Trigg to his sister-in-law, Anne Fleming, 20 May 1780, in ibid. Earlier Fleming's sister-in-law Anne Christian also had demonstrated an easy familiarity with the land business when she sent the military warrants of her brother-in-law, William Fleming, "to Col. Byrd to get alterd, as he [William Fleming] had not inserted the service he servd in, & then I shall send it to Wmbg." Annie Christian to Anne Fleming, 15 October 1774, in ibid.

56. See especially William Fleming to Anne Fleming, 19 and 20 April 1780, and 3 December 1789, in ibid.

57. Letitia Preston married Robert Breckinridge in July 1758. By 1763 the couple had moved from the vicinity of Staunton to a farm in the Roanoke Valley near Fincastle. At the time of Robert Breckinridge's death, the couple's children ranged in age from two-year old Preston to fourteen-year old William. Robert Breckinridge also had two sons from an earlier marriage. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 6-9, 30, and 32.

On the movements of Breckinridge's sons, see Dorman, Prestons, pp. 29 and 33; "James Breckinridge," DAB 3:5; and Correspondence of Letitia Preston Breckinridge in Breckinridge Family Papers, vols. 1-3, LC.

58. J[ohn] Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 9 February, 1783, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1, LC; William Breckinridge to his mother, 22 December 1784, ibid., vol. 2; Thomas Quirk to John Preston, 8 July 1785, Preston-Radford Papers, box 1, Alderman Library; and Lettice Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 11 May and 24 August 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3, LC.

59. Letitia Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 22 May 1784, Breckinridge Family Papers, LC, vol. 2; Letitia Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 10 June 1784, ibid., vol. 1; Letitia Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 10 July 1786,

ibid., vol. 3; and Letitia Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, [1786], ibid.

Francis Preston, son of William Preston and student of the law in Williamsburg, also wrote to his mother (by this time widowed) for money several times during the 1780s, see Francis Preston to Susanna Preston, 16 February 1786, and Francis Preston to John Preston, 15 December 1785, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS.

60. Arthur Campbell to Elizabeth Campbell, 24 May 1776, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers; Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, Tuesday Night [1770s], and 4 December 1770, both in Fleming Papers. Some elite women spun flax. See, for example, Robert Preston to James Breckinridge, 1 February 1814, Papers of James Breckinridge, Alderman Library. Preston notes, "My old mother is yet alive and frequently spins flax all day." In the 1770s some members of the western elite employed a "spinning girl" who travelled from house to house. See James McGavock to William Preston, 15 April 1779, Preston Family Papers, VHS and cf. Joan M. Jensen, Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 38. In the eighteenth century, at least, weaving usually was a male task. See Susanna Preston to William Preston, 29 August 1779, Preston Family Papers (Mss1P9267a) section 3, VHS, and Isaac Shelby to William Campbell, 10 August 1779, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, vol. 1. But for an early nineteenth-century female weaver, see [Robert Preston] Account Book, Preston Family Papers-Moore Collection.

On food preparation, see Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 11 November 1771, 3 July 1772, 29 April 1775, and Friday Morn [1770s], all in Fleming Papers. On the duties women were expected to understand but that elite women, if they were lucky, would never have to perform themselves, see Anne Christian to [Anne Fleming], 29 April 1784, ibid.

Quotation is from Mary Greenlee, deposition, 10 November 1806, p. 278. For other examples of women (not necessarily elite) involved in the wider market, see Evan Shelby to ?, 1776, Shelby Papers, LC, vol. 1; Sarah Shaver to John Preston, 13 February 1800, Preston-Radford Papers, Box 1, and Thomas L. Preston, 16 February 1812, Preston Family Papers-Didier, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. In each of these cases the women involved cared for livestock.

On women's cooperation and sharing of resources, see, Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 4 December 1770, 11 November 1771, and 29 April 1775, and Anne Fleming to Priscilla Wilson, May 1809, all in Fleming Papers; and Edward Johnson to William Preston, 16 December 1775, Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS.

On women's work on the northern New England frontier, see Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Martha Ballard and Her Girls:

Women's Work in Eighteenth-Century Maine," in Stephen Innes, ed., Work and Labor in Early America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 70-105, and A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, based on Her Diary, 1785-1812 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990).

61. Information on age at marriage and children of Brown and Breckinridge calculated from Dorman, Prestons, pp. 6-12. On Fleming's miscarriages, see Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 29 April 1775, Fleming Papers. On Fleming and Breckinridge's ill health, see Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 12 June 1772, 22 July 1773; and William Fleming to Anne Fleming, 19 and 20 April 1780, all in ibid.; and William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 2 November 1786, 30 September 1794, 23 May 1795, Breckinridge Family Papers, vols. 3, 11 and 12; John Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 10 April 1792, ibid., vol. 8; William Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 19 March 1786, ibid., vol. 3 and passim. On the difficulties of continuous childbearing and early infant care throughout the South generally in a slightly later period, see Sally McMillan, Motherhood in the Old South: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infant Rearing (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990).

62. On mothers with young children, see Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, Friday Morning [1770s], 16 January 1772, 11 April 1772, 12 June 1772, 30 January 1775, 20 November 1781, all in Fleming Papers. On Grandmothers, see Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 12 April 1774, and Anne Fleming to Anne Baxter, 22 October 1805, in ibid.

63. On women's learning to manage family farms generally, see Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters: the Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), pp. 216-227.

64. For a discussion of coverture in early America generally, see Norma Basch, In the Eyes of the Law: Women, Marriage, and Property in Nineteenth-Century New York (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), especially chapter two, and Marylynn Salmon, Women and the Law of Property in Early America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), especially chapters 2, 3, and 5. For an extended discussion of married women's property rights in Virginia, see Joan R. Gunderson and Gwen Victor Gampel, "Married Women's Legal Status in Eighteenth-Century New York and Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 39 (1982): 114-134; and Linda E. Speth, "More Than Her 'Thirds': Wives and Widows in Colonial Virginia," in Linda E. Speth and Alison Duncan Hirsh, Women, Family, and Community in Colonial America: Two Perspectives (New York:

Hayworth Press, 1983), pp. 7-13. The concept of coverture was not abandoned in Virginia until the passage of the married women's property rights act in 1877; see Suzanne D. Lebsock, "Radical Reconstruction and the Property Rights of Southern Women," Journal of Southern History 43 (1977): 195-216.

65. Will of Robert Breckinridge, 17 August 1772, Botetourt County Will Book A, pp. 36-40. William Preston and Andrew Wood were appointed executors; both qualified. The estate was valued at £784.1.9, Inventory of Robert Breckinridge, ibid.

66. William Preston to Letitia Breckinridge, 12 October 1773, 7 March 1774, and 12 July 1781, all in Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1. On her assistance to Preston, see William Preston to Letitia Breckinridge, 22 June 1777, 4 February 1783, and 4 March 1783, in ibid. On the ordinary, see Botetourt County Order Books as cited in Robert Douthat Stoner, A Seed-Bed of the Republic: A Study of the Pioneers in the Upper (Southern) Valley of Virginia (Roanoke: The Roanoke Historical Society, 1962), pp. 165 and 167. On overseers, see William Preston to Letitia Preston, 7 March 1774, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1; John Breckinridge to Letitia Preston, 8 November 1786 and 25 March 1786, ibid., vol. 3; and Lettice Preston, contract with Robert Wright, 16 March 1792, ibid., vol. 8. On crops, see John Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, 17 August 1783, and Lettice Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 11 May 1786, both in ibid., vols. 1 and 3.

67. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 12, 29-33. On the relationship between Lettice Breckinridge and her son John, see John Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 17 August 1783, 19 May 1783, 17 November 1784, 7 December 1784, and 25 March 1786, in Breckinridge Family Papers, vols. 1-3.

68. John Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 17 March 1784, ibid., vol. 2.

69. Agreement between Preston Breckinridge and Lettice Breckinridge, 30 July 1792, ibid., vol. 8.

70. John Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 19 August 1792, ibid.

71. On the slaves, see William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 10 March 1794, ibid., vol. 10. On Letitia Breckinridge's life in Kentucky, see William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 16 October 1793, 25 January 1794, ibid., vols. 9 and 10, and John Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 20 October 1796; Agatha Smith to Lettice

Breckinridge, 24 October [1796]; W. Warfield to Lettice Breckinridge, 6 December 1796; Eliza Meredith to John Breckinridge, 1 February 1797, ibid. vol. 14.

72. Will of William Preston, 29 March 1777, Francis Preston Memorandum Book, Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection.

73. Ibid.

74. The nature of the surviving record makes it difficult to gauge Susanna Preston's involvement in production for the market. Much of what survives concerns production for the plantation. See Susanna Preston, orders to John Champ [1784], 23 May 1786, 26 June 1786, 29 September 1786, [?] and 10 March 1789, 13 June 1789, 1 November 178[?], 12, 20, and 21 April 1790, 8 October 1790, 17 March 1797, all in Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS. Champ served as overseer on William Preston's Horse Shoe plantation. Preston devised the plantation to his sons John and Francis, but left the use of it to his widow during her widowhood "for the support of herself & children." See Codicil, 11 February 1781, Will of William Preston. Susanna Preston's orders are for corn, tobacco, hemp, and flax. Susanna Preston did not sign the overseer's contract drawn up by her sons for Smithfield. See Agreement between John and Francis Preston and Melcum Hunter, 1 October 1785, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS. Tripartite agreement between John Preston, Susanna Preston, and William Preston's heirs, 26 September 1806, and accompanying notes, James McDowell Sr. Papers, Alderman Library.

75. Ibid. See also List of Negroes given to her sons & daughters by my Mother . . . [and] Negroes Retained by my mother, [1806], Francis Preston Memorandum Book. E[dmonia] M. Preston to Sarah McDowell, 10 October 1812, James McDowell Sr. Papers; and John Preston to William Preston, 28 September 1815, typescript, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection. Quotation is from John Preston to [Francis Preston], 2 March 1815, Preston Family Paper-Gray Collection. Compromise of 1816, with accompanying notes, James McDowell Sr. Papers; and distribution of slaves, 1816, Francis Preston Memorandum Book. Edmonia M. Preston to Sarah McDowell, 1 January 1818, James McDowell Sr. Papers; and Dorman, Prestons, p. 13.

76. Will of William Fleming, 19 [?] 1795, Fleming Papers.

77. Anne Fleming to [?] [ca. 1804-1806]; Anne Fleming to George Baxter, [ca. 1804-1806]; Robert Breckinridge to Caleb Wallace, 16 May 1797; George Baxter to Anne Fleming,

10 May 1798; Caleb Wallace to Anne Fleming, 20 May 1798; David Ross to George Baxter, 5 February 1800; George Baxter to Anne Fleming, 5 February 1800; Anne Fleming to Benjamin Howard, 25 May 1802; George Baxter to Anne Fleming, 20 July 1805; Anne Fleming to Harry Innes, 13 August 1805; S. Wilson to Anne Fleming, 21 September 1806; all in Fleming Papers.

78. Anne Fleming to George Baxter [ca. 1804-1806]; Agreement between William Fleming and Leonard Fleming concerning John Fleming's share of his father's estate, March 1813; J.A. Minter to George Baxter, 1825 March 26; all in ibid.

79. This changing pattern in executorial nominations has been noted in several quantitative studies of inheritance in eighteenth-century Maryland and Virginia, but no one has explored the meaning of the shift. See, Daniel Blake Smith, Inside the Great House: Planter Family Life in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Society (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 237-238; Speth, "More Than Her Thirds," pp. 22-24; and Gail S. Terry, "Women, Property, and Authority in Colonial Baltimore County, Maryland: Evidence from the Probate Records, 1660-1759," (paper presented at Forty-fifth Conference on Early American History, Baltimore, September 1984), pp. 14-16.

80. The concept is that of the "deputy husband" discussed by Laurel Ulrich in Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), especially chapter 2, except that here it is extended beyond the grave.

81. Will of William Campbell, 28 September 1780, proved 16 April 1782, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers. The slave and maintenance above her dower were for the term of Elizabeth Campbell's widowhood only.

82. Will of Charles Campbell, 24 August 1761, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, vol. 1; and Will of Margaret Campbell, 13 October 1777, Washington County Wills, 1:7. Arthur Campbell, List of Papers Received from Mrs. Elizabeth Campbell . . . belonging to the Estates of Charles and Margaret Campbell, 18 December 1781; Arthur Campbell to Elizabeth Campbell, 31 December 1781; Elizabeth Campbell receipt to Richard Poston for legacy from Margaret Campbell [1782?]; all in Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, vol. 2.

Suzanne Lebsock notes that some women found the responsibilities of executorship daunting and preferred not to serve. See The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984), pp. 121-125. Clearly Campbell preferred the responsibility of power. Letitia

Breckinridge, Susanna Preston, and Anne Fleming apparently would also have opted for power, if given the choice.

83. Bond of Michael Hatler and William Dryden to Elizabeth Russell, William Christian, and Arthur Campbell, executors of William Campbell, 28 August 1782, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, vol. 2. Arthur Campbell to [John Breckinridge], 19 August 1785, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3. Appointment of Arthur Campbell and William Christian as guardians to orphans of William Campbell, 21 March 1783, Stuart-Baldwin Papers. Sarah's brother Charles died in 1785, see Memoranda on various subjects, loose paper in Francis Preston Memorandum Book, 1833. William Russell to Thomas Madison, 6 July 1787, Fleming Papers.

84. Arthur Campbell, Proposals, July 1787, Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection. Elizabeth Russell to Thomas Madison, 30 August 1788; Elizabeth Russell to Mr. Cooper, 24 March 1791; Articles of Agreement between Thomas Madison, guardian of Sally B. Campbell and Woolrich Crattinger, 24 September 1792; all in Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, vol. 2. Dorman, Prestons, p. 52.

85. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 24-25. In 1770 and 1771, Letitia Breckinridge (not yet widowed) loaned her brother-in-law a total of £44 in various coins. See John Howard, memo to Lettice Breckinridge, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. [1?]. William Preston to Lettice Breckinridge, 17 June 1777, ibid., vol. 1; and Thomas Prosser to William Preston, Preston Family Papers, box 3, VHS.

86. Botetourt County Order Book, 1776-1780, pp. 333 and 341-342, and 1780-1784, p. 64, as cited and quoted in Dorman, Prestons, pp. 26-27.

87. William Fleming to William Preston, 28 August 1780, Draper Collection, 5 QQ 64; the incident is also discussed in detail in Johnson, William Preston, pp. 271-272. Fischer asserts that "Love and violence together were common ingredients of backcountry marriages." See Fischer, Albion's Seed, pp. 675-680. The evidence does not permit comment on the presumed links between ethnicity and violence or the frontier and violence. But see, Certification of Francis Smith's oath that "he would never strike or hurt his Wife but in the Defense of his own Person nor untill she struck him first, nor would he on any pretence threaten to take away her Life," 10 May 1779, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1. Francis Smith was probably the same Francis Smith who married Preston's sister Anne. No reason for Smith's oath is given.

88. William Fleming to William Preston, 28 August 1780.

89. Dorman, Prestons, p. 27; John Floyd to William Preston, 6 October 1775, Draper Collection 33 S 285-288; Mary Howard to John Breckinridge [1784], Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 2; John Smith to John Preston, 22 May 1786, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS; Mary Howard to My Dr. Friend, [John Breckinridge?] 24 March 1787, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 4. Mary Howard to John Brown, 21 November 1788, typescript, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection. Mary Howard to John Breckinridge, 22 July 1792, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 8.

90. On Mary Howard's responsibility for family finances, see Harry Innes to [William Fleming], 11 February 1786, Fleming Papers; Mary Howard to John Breckinridge [1784], Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 2; Mary Howard, account with Lettice Breckinridge, 3 November 1784, ibid.; John Brown to John Preston, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS; Mary Howard to John Brown, 15 January 1787, typescript, ibid.; Dorman Prestons, p. 27, n. 23, notes that John Howard's property was taxed in Mary Howard's name in 1788, but in 1789 he again appeared on the tax list. The only other evidence of John Howard's continued participation in family finances is a receipt for £57.16 cash from John Howard to John Brown, 12 July 1784.

On the Mary Howard-Thomas Anderson affair, see Deed from William Preston and Thomas Prosser, Trustees of John Howard and John Howard and Mary his wife to Thomas Anderson, 8 May 1780, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1; John Preston to Thomas Anderson, 31 October 1783, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS; Thomas Anderson to John Preston, 8 November 1783, ibid.; Thomas Anderson to John Preston, 21 November 1783, Preston-Radford Papers. Quotation is from Mary Howard to [John Breckinridge], 22 February 1787, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3; Mary Howard to [John Breckinridge], 24 March 1787, ibid., vol. 4; Mary Howard, acknowledgment confirming sale of land, 19 July 1788, ibid., vol. 5; Mary Howard to John Brown, 21 November 1788, typescript, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection; Mary Howard to John Breckinridge, 22 July 1792, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 8.

91. First quotation is from Mary Howard to John Breckinridge, ibid, vol. 2; second quotation from Mary Howard to John Brown, 15 January 1787, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS; third quotation from Mary Howard to John Brown, 21 November 1788, typescript, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection. On John Howard's continued "insanity," see M. Haven to John Breckinridge, 8 May 1786, Breckinridge

Family Papers, vol. 3. On Mary Howard's attitude toward her husband, see also 24 March 1787.

92. Harry Innes to William Fleming, 11 February 1786, William Fleming Papers, and M. Haven to John Breckinridge, 8 May 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3.

93. Elizabeth Campbell's husband William was a member of the third generation. The other women belonged to the second generation.

94. Elizabeth Campbell to Anne Fleming, 22 January 1782, and Samuel Meredith to William Fleming, 28 January 1782. The letters concern the Flemings' son accompanying Campbell from Botetourt County to Amherst County. Campbell also arranged for a slave to ride back to Botetourt with Leonard Fleming. Two interpretations are possible: elites preferred to travel with a small entourage or travelling through the countryside alone in 1782 was dangerous. Allan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), p. 225, and Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 57, maintain that stores were "male spaces." For the west, see John Preston to James Breckinridge, 5 March 1795, Papers of James Breckinridge, Alderman Library.

95. Quotation is from William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 10 September 1794; but see also Lettice Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 2 June 1784; both in Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 11. On Anne Fleming's writing style, see her letters in Fleming Papers.

96. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming [ca.1777]; and Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 17 August 1787; both in Fleming Papers. William Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 22 April 179[4], Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 10. Will of William Preston, 29 March 1777, Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection; and Inventory and appraisement of William Preston's estate, 6 March 1790, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, vol. 2. Quotation is from Robert G. Albion and Leonidas Dodson, eds., Philip Vickers Fithian: Journal 1775-1776, Written on the Virginia-Pennsylvania Frontier and in the Army Around New York (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1934), p. 141.

97. See, for example, Will of William Preston, 29 March 1777, Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection, and Will of William Campbell, 28 September 1780, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, vol. 1. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 9 September 1783, Fleming Papers. Albion and Dodson, eds.,

Fithian, p. 141. On female education generally in post-Revolutionary America, see Linda K. Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (1980; reprint, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986), especially chapter 7.

98. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 47-48. Alexander Breckinridge to John Preston, 19 November 1784; Eliza Madison, receipt for surveyors fees to John Garwood, 5 March 1787; both in Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS. Eliza Madison to Archibald Stuart, 22 February 1790, Stuart-Baldwin Papers. Eliza Madison to William Preston, 4 December 1794, typescript, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection. Eliza Madison to John Preston, 9 November 1803, Preston Family Papers-Didier Collection. Eliza Madison to James McDowell, 9 July 1805, James McDowell Sr. Papers. Sarah McDowell to Eliza Madison, 17 March 1808, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection.

99. Eliza Madison to Dear Brother, 27 February 1797, typescript, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection.

100. Sarah B. [Campbell] Preston to James McDowell, 24 April 1814, James McDowell Sr. Papers.

101. Eliza Madison to James Breckinridge, 9 June 1793, Papers of James Breckinridge. Eliza Madison to [John Preston], 3 November 1800, Preston-Radford Papers. Eliza Madison to John Preston, 26 March 1805, Preston Family Papers-Didier Collection. See also, Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 8 April 1802, Papers of James Breckinridge. An alternative interpretation of Madison's last remark is that she simply forgot to mention her request.

102. James McDowell appears to have taken over the administration of William Preston's estate after John Preston, the executor, become insolvent. Anne T. Preston to James McDowell, 23 January 1817, and [c. 1817], James McDowell Sr. Papers. Mary P. Lewis to James McDowell, 22 February 1817, ibid. Another of Madison's sisters-in-law appears to have been less well informed and less certain of her ability to manage her own business affairs. See Edmonia M. Preston to Sarah McDowell, 10 October 1817, ibid.; E.M. Preston to John Preston, 16 August 1814, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection; E.M. Preston to James McDowell, 29 January 1815, 22 March 1815, and 8 June 1815, James McDowell Sr. Papers.

103. Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 February 1843; William Martin to Lyman Draper, Draper Collection, Tennessee Papers, as quoted in Gordon Aronhime,

"Guide and Commentary to Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, vol.1," LC; Peyton, History of Augusta County, pp. 67-68. I have not yet located the original accusation.

104. The ease with which eastern women like Susanna Preston and Elizabeth Campbell embraced the role of the active wife needs further exploration. The existence of the active wife among the eastern Virginia gentry during the mid-eighteenth century has been little explored by historians. No study of women in mercantile families or in planter families of recent merchant origins exists. No examinations of the frequency and duration of eastern planters' absences from home or of who ran their plantations in their absence have appeared.

CHAPTER III

"HAIL NUPTIAL BLISS!"[1]: RELATIONS BETWEEN HUSBANDS AND WIVES

Marriage bound men and women together as spouses. Between 1770 and 1815, traditional and companionate ideals of marriage coexisted in the Virginia backcountry. Actual marriages combined characterstics generally ascribed to one ideal or the other. The presence of characteristics representative of each ideal of marriage is usually construed as evidence of a gradual shift from traditional to companionate marriage. A more specific interpretation presented here argues that the changing internal dynamics of marriage after the Revolution resulted from the interplay of local circumstances and Revolutionary ideology.
The work of historian Laurel Ulrich suggests that traditional marriages encompassed a number of potential roles for wives which could be drawn upon as circumstances necessitated.[2] In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the tradition of the active wife faded, and was gradually superceded by the role of consort and advisor.

The traditional ideal of marriage rested on the concept of male command. In this vision of marriage husbands saw wives as subordinate helpmeets and wives viewed husbands as their superiors and protectors. Wealth and social status provided the criteria for selecting an appropriate mate. Duty, law, and community sanctions held marriages together, and procreation occupied a central place in them. Although the traditional ideal of marriage provided the philosophical underpinnings for Virginia's patriarchal institutional and legal structure until after the Civil War, some time after the middle of the eighteenth century a competing vision of marriage emerged--the companionate ideal. In the companionate marriage romantic love replaced wealth and social status as the appropriate criteria for choosing a mate. Mutual respect and affection bound couples together. In companionate marriages partners were often close to the same age, perceived each other as friends, consulted one another in decision-making and sustained each other emotionally. Some scholars maintain that companionate marriages resulted in greater autonomy for women, and perhaps even in an equal voice for wives in determining family affairs.[3]

The emergence of a viable network of roads in southwestern Virginia, the changing nature of occupations for elite men, and the creation of the ideal of the republican wife and mother all combined to reshape

relationships between spouses. As an improved system of roads developed in western Virginia after 1790, husbands and wives travelled together. In earlier decades husbands away on private or public business often left their wives behind to oversee the family farm and other business. As husbands entered occupations requiring more specialized educations, like the law, or separated their place of business from their residences, wives became less involved in the daily operation of business. They either lacked the necessary specialized skills or were physically removed from their husbands' workplaces. After the Revolution wives less often acted as their husbands' deputies in business and more often served as their confidantes and advisors. The emergence of the ideal of the republican mother gave wives a rationale for cultivating an interest in their husbands' political careers. Travel together also may have strengthened the emotional bond between spouses. The wife's role as consort and advisor now overshadowed the tradition of the active wife.

Marriages among the backcountry elite displayed characteristics ranging from purely traditional to almost completely companionate. The letters of Anne Henry Christian reveal a marriage characterized by traditional relationships between spouses. The marriage between her sister-in-law, Anne Christian, and William Fleming, however, met nearly all the criteria for a companionate marriage yet

still included elements of a traditional union. The marriage of Betsy Smith and the Scottish merchant Edward Johnson included contradictory aspects of both ideals. The early nineteenth century marriage of John Preston and Eliza Carrington Mayo came closest to realizing the companionate ideal.

Mostly Traditional: The Marriage of Anne Henry and William Christian

Anne Henry married William Christian in 1768 or 1769. He was in his mid-twenties; no record of her age survives. The couple probably met while William read law with Anne's brother Patrick. At the time of their marriage or shortly thereafter, William's father Israel deeded lands near the Stone House, where he kept a store, to his son as a marriage portion. Anne's father John Henry expressed joy at the "bountiful gift" but proved unable to match it. The couple may have lived with Israel, his wife Elizabeth, and their youngest daughter Rosanna at the Stone House for a short time before moving to the New River valley in 1770.[4]

Anne's failure to bring property equivalent to that of her husband into the marriage suggests that the couple married for love, but her correspondence indicates that relations between the spouses were essentially traditional in character. Anne and William lived at Mahanaim in the New River valley for fifteen years before moving to Kentucky.

Anne apparently had little say in deciding where the couple would live or when they would move. Shortly after the move to Mahanaim in 1770, she wrote to her sister-in-law Anne Fleming, who lived near the site of present-day Roanoake about five miles from the Stone House but thirty-five miles from Mahanaim. "We are now settled in our new Habitation, & I can't say but it is full as agreeable as I expected, but when I reflect on the great distance which is now between us it makes me a little maloncholy . . . . Mr. Christian is highly delighted with Mahanaim, & I cannot but take pleasure in seeing him pleasd." In 1775 when William contemplated a move 150 miles further west to the Holston River valley in present-day Tennessee, Anne expressed her regret to Anne Fleming more forcefully. "I long much to see you, but can't well tell when I shall have that pleasure, as we are about moving much further from you then here, I can't help telling you that the thoughts of going out to Holston seems to be a very disagreeable prospect to me, but as we are situated at present I see no help for it, I was flattering myself with thoughts of being a Neighbour to you once more, as Mr. Christian has long talked of buying Armstrongs place, but has now dropt it."[5]

The proposed move to Holston did not take place, but in 1785 William Christian began planning a move to Kentucky that would take Anne 500 miles from her sister-in-law. The surviving evidence indicates that once again Anne had little

influence on the decision to move. In January she wrote to Anne Fleming that "Mr. Gillon is broke up school here in order for our Children to prepare for their journey to Kentuckey, as we propose to go out there in April, it is but a late determination that of Carying the Family so shortly." By February William had changed his mind, and Anne observed to Anne Fleming that "it is determined that I am not to go out to Kentuckey this Spring & if all goes well I expect to move out in the fall or Spring [of next year] but your brother seems to wish to see more of the country before he carrys out his Family to live there." In March William reversed his latest decision and again called on Anne and the rest of the family to join him in Kentucky immediately. By this time, however, he clearly had taken Anne into his confidence concerning the business aspects of the move and his reasons for making it. She explained to Anne Fleming, "we are amazingly in debt at the Saltworks. which seems to be a bad prospect before us, as we were in hopes by selling here to get clear of debt & be on a good footing when we got to Kentucky. [Bob] Daniel is gone to Beargrass to live & has rented out the whole works to the neighbours, & gives one Mr. Hinch the use of a furness & 1 bushell Salt P[er] day just to receive the rents paid in weekly from the people, Hinches wages they say is at the least worth 600 a year, So upon the whole we must go there or be ruind Since we have sold here."[6]

Apparently William did give his wife discretionary authority to choose what route to take to Kentucky, but Anne was not entirely comfortable with having the weight of that decision upon her shoulders. She confided to Anne Fleming about her difficulty in securing guards for the household and in getting advice regarding which road to take. "Logan writes that no guard can be expected from that Country at [the] busie season of the year, & no answer from Shelby at all, Knox sent word that He would meet us with some men, but we think he might have wrote if he had been sincere. so God only knows what we are to do for the best. no body will take it upon them to advise us which road to use, & Erwin himself says he can't pretend to say which is best now but before he went out he was full of the wilderness road, but having no incouragement of Company we are distressed to Know what to do, the Pittsburg road is safe but going down the Ohio they say proves sickly to numbers who have tryed it."[7]

In spite of her misgivings, Anne successfully oversaw the move of at least fifty-two people--including her mother-in-law, her five children, and forty-five slaves--to a settlement on Holston River where they planned to spend the summer before continuing on to Kentucky. Indeed, her confusion over what course to take, given the severe economic dislocations of the 1780s and growing hostility of the Indians to the increasing numbers of white settlers moving into Kentucky, cannot stand alone as an indication of

her lack of desire for authority, even when thrust upon her. Yet Anne's comments about her husband on earlier occasions indicate that she felt most comfortable when he took responsibility for making decisions that affected the entire family. She viewed her role as a supportive and subordinate one.[8]

In 1782 Stephen Trigg, husband of Anne Christian's sister-in-law and Anne Fleming's sister Mary, was killed by Indians in Kentucky, where he lived with his wife and children. Mary Trigg found herself "deprived of my Dearest earthly comfort . . . in a wilderness of a country far distant from every relation I have on earth with four orphan Children an big with the fifth." Within a year Mary made plans to marry another Virginia emigrant, Bob Daniel. William Christian opposed his sister's marriage to a man of lesser status, in spite of her isolated situation. Anne Christian stood with her husband in condemning her sister-in-law's action. As she explained to Anne Fleming, "your brother tried every way in his power to break of[f] the match but to no purpose, he drove the chap of[f] intirely as he thought, but your sister found means of Corresponding with him & made up matters again, I must say I was even shocked to hear of her marrying that fellow, he & his Brother were here as they went out & stayd a day or two & I coud not have thought your sister so capable of being imposed upon by any person whatever-- as for Beauty, Sence,

Fortune, Family or Education, he is possessed of neither, as to his temper I can't say anything at all." [9]

In 1784 Anne again remained unquestioningly loyal to her husband when he decided that his niece Polly Bowyer, who was living with them, should "make her home at her Grand Daddys." Polly was the daughter of William Bowyer and his deceased wife Elizabeth Christian Bowyer, the sister of William Christian and Anne Fleming. She had resided with the Christians for at least several months and had also spent time with the Flemings and her Bowyer relatives. In the mid-1770s Israel and Elizabeth Christian had followed their son to the New River valley and now lived nearby. William expressed a dual motive for his desire that Polly live with his parents. First, "whilst she was Company to her [grandmother] she might be learning to spin, Milk, Iron &c that if she never should have occasion for doing those things, there was no harm done in the learning." Second, "by her being there a while & being oblegeing & humouring her Grand Daddy" he might be prevailed on to "make her Fortune, as . . . [he] has mentioned making her a present of some of his Kentucky lands." [10]

Polly balked; William persevered. When Polly and William's twelve-year old daughter Sally went to spend the weekend at their grandparents house, William ordered the slave woman Phoebe, who worked in both households, to carry Polly's clothes down to Israel's house with her. At this

point, Polly "got affronted" and refused to return to William's house "to make up her white gown." She wrote to her Bowyer relatives to "come up for her soon," even though she had earlier "intended staying the summer."[11]

Anne Christian professed no understanding of why an adolescent girl might prefer to spend the summer with her cousins instead of learning housewifery from her frail grandmother and attempting to placate an irascible old man. In her opinion, if Polly "would reflect a moment, she must confess her Uncle was sufficiently capable of giving her good advice & has her interest much at heart. . . . a better acquaintance with the World will make her view things in a true light & let her see that her Uncle was right. for I have never found him wrong."[12]

Anne proved a capable deputy to William. The couple settled in the Beargrass region of Kentucky near present-day Louisville in 1785. While William was across the Ohio River on an expedition against the Indians in March 1786, Anne wrote to inform him of affairs at home. "On Saturday 2 OColock [sic] Warfield was killd, where Hites waggon road crosses goose creek about a Mile & half from here, that same Evening Capt. Hite was fired at by 5 Indians. . . . Capt. R[obert] Breckenridge returned by here yesterday Evening having come upon the tracts [sic] of Indians in different places, . . . yesterday 4 of McManeses Horses were stolen near the House & 2 Indians seen near Lyns Station, Saunders

& Capt. Thomas are killd up at the mouth of Kentucky, the Station at the Mouth of Goose Creek will move up to Tayllors imeadiately, but Hites place will break up totally I hear . . . I fear the people at Saltburg & mud Garrison are in danger of Indians, & I thought it best to let you know our situation as flying reports are seldom true." Anne then explained the actions she had taken concerning their own household. "I stopt Brodheads Waggon & sent her home as we all thought it dangerous to send the Negroes in the Woods to Cut logs & the Creek is still High, I told Osborne He shoud have Capt. Edwards old house here." Anne concluded her report by advising William, "pray be carefull on your way home, & run no risks that can be possibly avoided."[13]

William could not heed Anne's warning. He was killed by Indians in southern Indiana on April 9, 1786. Rosanna Wallace, another of William's sisters who lived in Kentucky, described Anne's reaction to his death. "She took on after this misfortune happened amaseingly, it had like to hurt her health but one thing that I think is very happy She is not with Child as was thought at first." Back in Virginia John Preston observed to his brother Francis, "The [news of] the death of our worthy good friend Col. Christian at Kentucky [I] suppose has reached you. . . . the best Woman in the world will feel this lost [sic] most sensibly, how she will bear with it I am at a lost [sic] to know but hope her

christian fortitude of which she has a due share will bear her through."[14]

Anne continued to express grief at the loss of her "Protector & Friend" in the years following William's death. But as John Preston had predicted, she relied on "her christian fortitude" to "bear her through." In August 1787 she wrote to her mother-in-law, Elizabeth Christian, who had returned to Virginia to live with her daughter Anne Fleming. "I have experienced many comforts & mercies amidst my afflictions, which ought to make me thankfull whilst I live -- & when I look back to that mournfull time (when I was deprivd of my dear friend & husband) & reflect that all was dark, gloomy & dismall before me & see myself brought through to this day; through so much troubles and distress, it makes me wonder at the great goodness of God, & shows me how able he is to bear us up under every tryal."[15]

William's death initiated a series of trials for Anne; chief among them was the press of creditors for payment of debts. Anne was not among William's executors, but he left her control over their Kentucky plantation and the profits of the saltworks for the duration of her widowhood. He clearly expected her to work closely with the couple's son-in-law, Alexander Scott Bullitt, who was named an executor, to oversee the financial welfare of the family. From Anne's perspective, Bullitt proved a weak reed. She poured out her frustrations in letters to her sister-in-law Anne Fleming.

"Oh what troubles has the death of that ever dear & beloved Husband of mine brought on my poor helpless Family, I must enjoin Secresy from you on this distressing subject, the Man whose connection might have promised protection to my Family, has turnd our Enemy & God of heaven only knows for what, only because he found me & my poor children deprived of our Protector & Friend, & saw us lost destitute & helpless at the dreadfull time of my affliction."[16]

Anne's protestations of helplessness and her expressed need for a male protector to replace her deceased husband raises the question of the extent of her knowledge during her marriage of the workings of the larger financial world in which William operated. The evidence is mixed. Her dispute with Bullitt centered on the fact that shortly after William's death she had passed a bond to which she "had no right" to a Louisville merchant. The bond technically belonged to the estate of Israel Christian, not William. Israel had died in 1784, and William had become his father's executor. Anne's later correspondence suggests that she knew she had no right to the bond, but out of desperation used it anyway, intending to repay the loan and trusting her mother-in-law to understand. She asked Anne Fleming to "tell your dear Mother about the bond & write me if She is Satisfied with it, I hope to rais [sic] a great deal of money this winter from Salt, & will send it to her as I can get it, Florinoys other bond I have safe."[17]

Elizabeth Christian accepted her daughter-in-law's explanation and her proposal for repaying the bond. She wrote to Bullitt that "out of Florney's debt, the L150 bond I wish to lay in my Daghter [sic] Christians hands till it is convenient for the Estate to pay it." Later Anne wrote to Elizabeth in considerable detail about her activities in paying off Israel Christian's debts in Kentucky. She did not accomplish this entirely on her own, however, but relied on the assistance of her brother-in-law and Elizabeth's son-in-law Caleb Wallace. In fact, as late as October 1787, Anne noted, "I have been much perplexed how or in what manner to conduct matters, for I was ignorant & amongst strangers, & am Intirely unacquainted with my dear Mr. Christians affairs (how they stood in the settlement), as he transacted most of his business down the country." Concerning her ongoing disputes with Bullitt, Anne observed to her mother-in-law in the following January, "it was highly ungenerous in the Gent [Bullitt] to plead Ignorance & endeavour to throw the blame upon me in deceiving him, which woud have been in <u>fact</u> the highest injustice in me, and an Action most detestable, but as he had examind the papers, long before I coud have fortitude to open one of them, I presume he was acquainted with all of them, but thought it better to throw an odium on me, then lay under it himself, & I have been a good deal accustomd to such disparagements

lately may the Lord give me patience humbly to bear all things that his wisdom sees fit to try me with."[18]

The dispute with Bullitt grew out of the intermingling of the estates of William and Israel Christian, and for that reason may not represent a fair measure of Anne's knowledge and abilities. The entangled finances of the two estates also confounded the men in the Christian extended kin group, and they sought the opinions of several lawyers. Nevertheless, the affair with Bullitt provides insights into both the nature of Anne's relationship to William and her general attitudes about relations between the sexes.[19]

Anne's comment that Bullitt "had examind the papers long before I coud have fortitude to open one of them" suggests that she was only generally familiar with William's business affairs and that her grief and distress at his death prevented her from going over his papers. Her remark that she was "Intirely unacquainted with" William's affairs confirms this impression. Possibly Anne knew less about William's economic activities in Kentucky than she had in Virginia. In Virginia Israel Christian had kept a store at the Stone House and William (and Anne?) had run an ordinary at Mahanaim; many local transactions would have taken place on site. In Kentucky William conducted his business "down the country," distant from his household and from his wife. In 1785 Anne's geographic mobility may have been even more limited than usual by the recent birth of her daughter

Dorothea. Whether or not Anne enjoyed a working knowledge of William's economic activities, she certainly doubted her ability to manage them independently. When Bullitt disappointed her she sought and found a new "protector" in Caleb Wallace, who served as her informal advisor and agent.[20]

Anne's other activities after William's death reveal that she was competent in, if not comfortable with, her new role as head of the family. She and her children took refuge with Rosanna and Caleb Wallace at their farm, Viney Grove, for a brief time, but by May 1787 she was living in her own household at Cove Spring. In August of the same year she made plans to rent "old Mr. Myer's place 10 miles from" Cove Spring. It came complete with "a good plantation, houses & gardens & the place [was] safe." She could not stay at Cove Spring "having no conveniences & everything to buy," and she refused to return to Beargrass because of the Indian threat. By January 1788 the family was safely ensconced at Myer's and Anne had engaged Mr. Gillion, their old schoolmaster from Virginia, to teach the children. The slaves had been rented out and Anne was making plans to "have some salt brought here for sale."[21]

A deep afffection had probably characterized the union of Anne Henry and William Christian, but the relationship between them more closely resembled the traditional model than the companionate ideal of marriage. William alone

decided where the couple would live and when they would move. He informed Anne of his decisions and explained the reasoning behind them, but she had little influence on the decision-making process. She perceived her role as subordinate and supportive and his as superior and protective. In contrast to Elizabeth Christian's treatment of her after William's death, Anne showed little sympathy for the uniquely female predicaments of Mary Trigg and Polly Bowyer. She unquestioningly supported William's judgments concerning Mary's marriage and Polly's residence. Although she proved a competent deputy to William during his life, as a widow Anne still felt the need for a male protector and advisor. Religion sustained her after William's death and through her difficulties with Alexander Bullitt and shaped her ideas about appropriate relationships between spouses in marriage and between men and women in society.

Tradition Tempered: The Marriage of Anne Christian and William Fleming

Although religion also shaped Anne and William Fleming's perceptions of gender roles, their marriage reflected both the emotional support and the joint decision-making that characterized the companionate ideal. William Christian's sister Anne married William Fleming in 1763. William was thirty-four; Anne was probably in her early twenties. While William certainly was not propertyless when

he married, Anne brought her husband, a physician and soldier, the knowledge of business possessed by a merchant's daughter as well as the farm Belmont. Her status as Israel Christian's daughter probably enhanced William's standing in backcountry society.[22]

Chapter two discusses the extent to which Anne functioned as her husband's capable deputy while he attended to public business and oversaw his investments in Kentucky during the 1770s and 1780s. During these extended absences William often longed for the companionship of his wife. In 1774-- after eleven years of marriage-- he concluded a letter to Anne by noting, "I have nothing more particular to write but Sentiments not proper to commit to paper." Three days later he expanded on this expression of his feelings, being careful not to overstep the bounds of etiquette. "I have heard of sympathizing thoughts professing [possessing?] the Breasts of two Distant Lovers if there be any thing in this fond Opinion you must know what passes in my heart at present and not accuse this letter of coldness. More I need not say nor would it be prudent to commit it to paper." In 1780 he ended a long letter concerning land office matters by noting, "I could write with pleasure by way of Chat but may as well conclude in the hopes of seeing you soon." Nearly a decade later William wrote again from Kentucky, "In your last, you express the same uneasy sensations that perpetually haunt my Breast, in being separated so long from

my dear Family. Oh, my Dr. Life, the fatuge [sic] disappointment and delays I meet with in settling my business are nothing compared to what I suffer in being detained so long from you."[23]

In addition to shared affection, William's letters to Anne also suggest that the couple arrived at joint decisions concerning the management of Belmont, especially while William was away. He sometimes asked Anne to carry out explicit instructions, but more often he advised her on several options and left the final choice to her. Her sole surviving letter to him informs him of her activities with regard to taxes and accounts; she appears to have been fully conversant with William's financial affairs. The only obvious indication of deference in her letter is the salutation, "My Dear Sir." William alternately wrote to "My Dr. Nancy" or "My Dr. Mrs. Fleming."[24]

When William was present, especially in the 1760s and 1770s, Anne probably assisted him in his medical practice. Eighteenth-century patients often boarded with their physicians while under their care, and when this circumstance occurred Anne's domestic duties and William's responsibilities as a physician overlapped. William curtailed his practice after the mid-1770s but still treated friends. In 1780 Anne accompanied him to John Howard's house to attend his wife Mary after her beating. In 1795 the wife of Harry Innes, a prominent member of the Bedford

County gentry who had moved to Kentucky, stayed with the Flemings while William treated her for an unspecified illness. Although Elizabeth Innes did not recover, shortly after her death Harry wrote Anne Fleming to thank her for the "attention & kindness render'd" his wife "during her stay under your hospitable roof." Innes expressed particular gratitude to Anne for "the many friendly conversations which you held with my dear girl, they were a foundation to a belief which enabled her to encounter the King of Terrors with fortitude & [a] smile upon death--Never did a person take their departure with more composure and serenity."[25]

In spite of their cooperative endeavors, however, in one area William exercised his sole right to make decisions --he decided where the couple would live. When Anne first raised the issue of moving to Kentucky in 1780, William replied, "You mention that Circumstances seem unfavorable for our moving here--have you any serious thoughts of it things must be greatly altered since I came out. . . . The country is good land. Attended with many Natural inconveniences. The difficulties for new Settlers such as you can never go through." The couple remained in Virginia while Anne's siblings and later her own children crossed the Appalachians. She never visited Kentucky. In 1792 her niece Priscilla Bullitt, wife of the infamous Alexander S. Bullitt, wrote, "I formerly had some hope of Uncles moving

to Kentucky but now allmost despair of ever seeing you in this part of the world."[26]

The reason William gave for refusing to move to Kentucky was Anne's delicate health. Whether or not the problems proved serious enough to preclude the move remains undetermined, but they undoubtedly existed. The exact nature of Anne's complaint was never discussed by her contemporaries, but it apparently related to frequent pregnancies and childbirth. Over the course of her thirty-two year marriage Anne bore fourteen children, only half of whom lived beyond infancy. In July 1773 Anne Christian wrote to her sister-in-law that she was "extreemly Sorry to hear of your low state of health, as I thought you lookd better the last time I saw you then you had done a great while before . . . ." In 1781 shortly after the birth of Flemings' daughter Anne, her sister-in-law noted, "I was exceeding glad to hear by your mama of your being pretty hearty again . . . I congratulate you on the birth of your little Daughter & hope it may Please God to spare her."[27]

William not only saw himself as holding ultimate responsibility for decisions affecting the whole family, but also perceived his role as protector for Anne and the rest of the family. In 1779 he wrote to her from Kentucky that "I cannot command the active fancy from frequently presenting you to my Imagination in my sleep. I am

frequently with you, sometimes releiving you from distressing scenes such as I hope in God you are not in."[28]

If William was protector to Anne, God served as protector to them both. Most of his letters close with an appeal for divine protection. In September 1774, two weeks before the Battle of Point Pleasant, he wrote, "I recommend you, him [their son Leonard], & the Family to the Protection of that Being who is equally present this Moment and at all times, both with You & me who knows our most secret thoughts both now & always & is equally able to preserve you & protect me." In 1784, he concluded, "I with confidence trust myself, my Family and all my connections to the care of that Over Ruling Providence who never has deserted us . . . may he take us all under his divine protection and grant us a happy meeting in peace." And finally in 1789, William appealed to "God" to "grant you his protection & direction agreeable to my requests . . . [and] prepare his tobacco plant beds in time."[29]

William Fleming's hierarchical world view placed God at the head of the universe, himself at the head of his family, and his wife Anne immediately beneath him. While William saw his wife as a source of emotional support and a capable helpmeet, he never abandoned his view of himself as protector of her and ultimate decision-maker for his family. He recognized that his absences forced Anne to take on responsibilities that usually fell to him and acknowledged

the fact when he noted, "I am sensible of the trouble & difficulties my absences subject you to." In spite of these traditional attitudes, William's decisions rarely seem to have been arbitrary, and he appears to have genuinely valued his wife's opinions.[30]

Anne Fleming's attitudes about gender roles and the relationship between spouses proved more difficult to discern. If she expressed resentment at being forced to act in William's stead, her complaints have not survived. After his death in 1795, she generally did not adopt the helpless stance assumed by Anne Christian. Although she sought advice from family friends and her sons-in-law, the requests for aid were straightforward in tone and her letters contained no self-deprecating references. Yet for all the affection, friendship, and shared decision-making, the partnership between William and Anne Fleming was not a partnership between equals. To the extent that theirs was a companionate marriage, it was one because William wished it to be so.[31]

Conflicting Ideals: The Marriage of Elizabeth Smith and Edward Johnson

There is no evidence that Anne Fleming ever challenged any of William's decisions, and Anne Christian supported her husband's positions with a degree of devotion that approached blind faith. But not all wives proved so

accommodating. In 1773 Susanna Preston's sister Elizabeth (Betsy) Smith married Edward Johnson; the couple resided in Manchester. While the Johnsons may have felt genuine affection for each other, they vocally disagreed about two aspects of their life together-- money and children.[32]

In July 1775 Betsy bore her first child, a daughter. Edward noted the progress of his wife's recovery in a letter to his brother-in-law William Preston. "Betsy has been threatened with sore Breasts but . . . I flatter myself she'll get clear even of that & if she does I will with pleasure say She has had a most happy time for she was well and walking about the day after the affair. In August 1776 a second child, a son, was born. Another son followed in February 1778, and Edward wrote, "the mother has had her caudle and composed & I hope will do well but I doubt she'll keep her determination of not having any more, I think we have done pretty well this is the third in 31 months."[33]

Betsy Johnson failed to "keep her determination of not having any more" and her repeated pregnancies became a point of contention in the Johnsons' marriage. In August 1779 Edward told William Preston that "Mrs. Johnson is well & within a few days of adding another branch to the stock." A few months later he noted, "my rib is likewise well but from an overabundance of Sire Confined at home while other matrons are in the ball rooms because she has nothing to wear to such places, & she grows so fast & Lutestrings &

Brocades follows so regularly the example that my little income cannot afford the madam . . . anything better than very pretty Virginia Cloth of which (thank the good woman) she generally keeps herself plentifully stored, she complains & wonders what I am always busie & anxious about, I never she says make any purchases (only 4 Negroes & 3m [3,000] acres of land Madam says I) & theres Mr. this & Mr. t'other who live on their care, always at the billiard table or . . . their family whose wives [have only] to ask for anything &C &C. but I like . . . [to] look minutely into the situation of these gay wives & extravagant husbands & still sence some things more material that she enjoys that they have not & so we jog on these long winter evenings with our little fry about us in as much real felicity & Cheerfullness as any pair whatever, so much for family matters."[34]

From Edward's perspective his concerns were significant; his wife's trivial and frivolous. She wanted new ball gowns while he struggled to insure the future of their ever increasing family by investing in land and slaves. In July 1778, between the births of their third and fourth children, Edward wrote to Preston, "have sent you three Newspapers, I can't keep them from Betsey or shou'd have had a pretty large parcell, I think in future to leave them at the store where they'll be in no danger of Mutillation for Polines, French Jacket paterns, &c &c &c."

If Betsy recorded her side of the argument, that document has not survived, but her husband's letters clearly indicate that she resented the pregnancies which so delighted him. She also may have faced increasing difficulties in feeding and clothing a household that had grown to include eight additional people-- four children and four slaves-- in four years at a time when non-importation and the Revolution cut into the profits of merchants like Edward.[35]

Edward's occasional references to "my rib" combined with his apparently autocratic control of family finances reflect both a traditional view of marriage and a low opinion of women's work. But Betsy's continuing arguments with her husband do not suggest that she felt constrained by a posture of submission or the need to be "agreeable." She may also have possessed some leverage in determining where the couple would live. When asking his brother-in-law to orchestrate the purchase of Kentucky lands to insure a secure future for his sons, Edward noted "if they are to go there I think it the best way to have them settled there early for which purpose I would remove as soon as it cou'd be done with convenience or I cou'd prevail with my ribb to go with me." Edward's "rib" apparently resisted.[36]

Mostly Companionate: The Marriage of Elizabeth Anne Carrington Mayo and John Preston

In many ways the early nineteenth-century marriage of John Preston and Elizabeth Anne Carrington Mayo may have come closest to the prototypical companionate marriage. John Preston married Eliza Mayo on March 30, 1811; it was the second marriage for both. He was forty-seven; she was forty-two or three. Preston brought six children to the union-- five by his first wife Mary Radford and an (illegitimate?) son Whitley. Mayo had had three or four children with her first husband George, but only one had survived beyond infancy. The couple would eventually have one son together.[37]

By the time of her death in 1810, Mary Radford and John Preston had been married for more than eleven years. At the time of their marriage in 1798, John had moved from his mother's house at Smithfield to the lands left him by his father at the Horseshoe Bottom. In 1809 after he was appointed treasurer of the state of Virginia, the Prestons established a second residence in Richmond. The task of provisioning both of these establishments fell to Mary. In January 1810 John wrote to John Champ, his overseer at the Horseshoe, that "My wife wishes to have the Best & cleanest of the hogs lard put into a good sound keg & sent down & all the off fall [sic] made into soap & also sent down . . . it is to be hard soap." At the end of the letter he noted, "My wife yet keeps about but expects d[aily] to be confined."[38]

Shortly thereafter the couple's daughter Mary (Polly) Radford Preston was born; Mary Preston did not live long after her daughter's birth. In April 1810 the slave Godfrey Brooks wrote from the Horseshoe to his master in Richmond. "I am very sorry for the loss of my mistress whome we all lament sorely. But we must all submit to the will of our Creator and Bear it with fortitude in a Christian manner." Brooks still had the "soap and a tub of lard" that Mary had ordered, and he offered to send it to Preston "at any time you Please."[39]

In the following month John lamented the loss of his wife in a letter to his mother Susanna Preston. "My afflictions which have been as much as could be borne have reduced me to a very humble frame of mind . . . . I have been severely chastened but feel under all as if my God yet viewed me as one of his sons. I do not despair & have an humble hope that through his mercy & the mediation of my Saviour I shall enjoy eternal happiness, & yet some temporal blessings. . . . My dear little children are a hapiness to me & next to the salvation of my soul are dear to me. I must do all I can for them . . . I am now doubly bound & that care which was pleasantly & jointly bestowed on them by me & their affectionate & beloved Mother must now be given to them by me alone."[40]

In the aftermath of his wife's death, however, John Preston parcelled his daughters out among his adult

siblings. Four year old Sarah left almost immediately to stay with her aunt Sarah Preston McDowell in Rockbridge County. Daughters Eliza and Susanna initially lived with their father and attended school in Richmond, but by the fall of 1810 they had been sent to Abingdon to stay with their uncle Francis and his wife. The baby, Polly Radford, died in July. Only sons William and John remained in Richmond with their father after their mother's death.[41]

By November 1810 affairs at the Horseshoe were "going on not as well as might be expected." Preston's duties as treasurer kept him in Richmond much of the time, and from there he could not adequately supervise activities at his farm. In January 1811 his brother Francis wrote to John. "I called at the Horse Shoe and spent part of a day looking over your farm, having heard at Smithfield that it was not going on to advantage. I rode over it all and find things in pretty good order, the stock looks well as also does your small grain but I find from Mr. Champs extreem old age and consequent feebleness that he cannot command your negroes . . . I therefore employed one Pollard by the month to assist him."[42]

Two months later John Preston married Eliza Mayo. His niece Susan McDowell congratulated him on having married "so amiable a woman" who would make "an affectionate wife and tender mother." Eliza proved to be both of these and more.[43] By September 1812 she was supervising affairs at the

Horseshoe. She oversaw the production of cloth, and foiled an attempt by a resident tenant family to cheat the Prestons out of that commodity. The details of the tenants' activities Eliza refused to commit to paper, but she wrote to John that "notwithstanding all I have wrote sure I am that when you come to be fully acquainted with all their proceedings you will be astonished." Shortly before making "arrangements for a comfortable confinement," Eliza initiated proceedings for hiring yet another overseer to supervise the farm in the Prestons' absence.[44]

Eliza Carrington had not entered either of her two marriages empty handed. At the time of her marriage to George Mayo her uncles set up a trust to protect the slave property she had received from her father's estate. The trust remained in effect after her marriage to John Preston. In 1819 when a public audit found his treasurer's accounts in arrears, Eliza tried to break her trust. She hoped to salvage the family's finances by selling her own slaves. Whether or not she succeeded remains undetermined.[45]

In 1821 Eliza again tried to help her husband by raising money from her relatives and another unidentified source to purchase some of John's slaves which were being sold to repay his debt to the government. Eliza's attempt failed and in September she wrote to Francis Preston, who served as one of his brother's trustees. "I pledged my word at the time, that this money [for purchasing slaves] should

be refunded very shortly or before it should be wanted, or [I] would return the negroes again in place of it. Two posts ago I received letters informing me that I had no hopes from the quarters I confidently calculated on-- I therefore return the negroes to you."[46]

The marriage of John and Eliza Preston displayed many of the hallmarks of the companionate marriage. The partners were roughly contemporary in age, and they formed a union based on mutual affection. Decisions affecting the well-being of the entire family were often made jointly. The fact that Eliza Preston held property that fell outside her husband's control further contributed to a perception of equality between the partners.

Still, traditional ideas about relations between spouses pervaded the Prestons' marriage. Despite his affection for Eliza, John needed a mother for his children and someone to oversee and coordinate the operation of his two households. For her part, even Eliza referred to her activities at the Horseshoe in 1812 as "stewardship" for John during his absence. When her husband's financial situation demanded it, she proved willing to sacrifice her own economic independence to benefit him and the rest of the family, in spite of the fact that she probably had nothing to do with creating the state of affairs in the treasurer's office that led to John's financial disgrace.[47]

Examined together, the marriages of Anne and William Christian, Anne and William Fleming, Betsy and Edward Johnson, and Eliza and John Preston reveal a range of possible relations that could exist between spouses. They also demonstrate that no single ideal dominated any particular marriage. The marriage of Anne and William Christian comes closest to exemplifying a single type-- the traditional marriage-- but the other three marriages all combined aspects of the traditional and companionate ideals. Indeed the clashes between the Johnsons suggest that Edward may have clung to one ideal of the relationship while Betsy embraced another. The marriages of the Flemings and the Prestons included elements of both types. The coexistence of two competing ideals may indicate that the transition from one to the other was underway, but as the historian Suzanne Lebsock has pointed out, if such was the case, the transitional phase in Virginia continued throughout most of the nineteenth century. For the backcountry elite that flourished in the last half of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth, two factors militated against full acceptance of the companionate ideal-- the continuing influence of a religion which saw wives as subordinate to husbands and women as subordinate to men, and the persistence of Virginia's patriarchal legal structure until after the Civil War.[48]

In the aftermath of the American Revolution, however, a combination of changing regional circumstances and the emergence of national ideals about the roles of women helped to redefine the internal dynamics of relationships between spouses. The development of a network of roads that could accommodate carriages and chairs as well as riders on horseback enabled elite women to travel with their husbands on extended journeys instead of remaining behind to supervise family farms and other economic endeavours. The separation of home and work place in urban settings and the increasing specialization of knowledge that accompanied the professionalization of the law tended to exclude women from some aspects of family business. The extent to which women exercised delegated authority for their husbands declined correspondingly. Since wives had fewer occasions to exercise authority over family affairs, overt declarations of deference became less necessary. Men and women no longer needed reassurance that God's hierarchy remained intact.

At the same time that social and geographical conditions restricted wives access to familial authority, an emerging national ideology defined a civic role for women in the new nation, that of the republican mother. Formally denied the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, women were encouraged to channel their civic energies into rearing republican sons. At least a few elite backcountry wives extended that role by taking an active interest in their

husbands' political careers. Such activities promoted a sense of partnership between spouses.[49]

Before and during the American Revolution extended periods of separation appear to have been routine among elite married couples in the Virginia backcountry. Anne Christian, Anne Fleming, Mary Trigg, and Susanna Preston all remained behind while their husbands travelled to Williamsburg or to Kentucky and the Ohio country on personal and provincial business. As road networks improved, their daughters more often accompanied their husbands on visits to kin on the other side of the Appalachians and on trips to Richmond, Philadelphia, or Washington to attend to government business. Although extended separations nearly always proved emotionally trying for the couples involved, as travel together became more commonplace, separations may have taken on additional significance for both spouses.

A few months after his marriage to Sarah (Sally) Buchanan Campbell in 1793, Francis Preston left their home in Abingdon to travel to Greenbrier County. In a letter to his brother he noted, "I have not heard a word from my Dear Wife since I left her. I am almost borne down with insupportable anxietude, being not much habituated with a wife & being much pleased therewith, you may depend my absences from her is almost an [insurmountable?] burthen to my patience . . . Don't get married till you can stay at home."[50]

More than two decades later, Robert Preston, an aging kinsman of Francis, complained with weariness of life on the road when business forced him to spend several weeks away from his wife. To her he wrote, "Now my dear Peggy I tell you I am as compleatly tired of Tavern living as I ever was and has as Great & strong a desire to be at home with you as when you were in prime of life. I believe Age has rather strengthened than reduced my affection for you: You are & have been the repository of my in ward thoughts & the real friend & comforter in Mental Distress."[51]

Sally Preston eventually accompanied her husband to Philadelphia where he served in the U.S. Congress. Long afterwards her daughter recalled that there her mother "was placed in a situation to learn more than She would have done in the highest schools of Modern Times." In Virginia, she kept a carriage and travelled regularly to the houses of various family members.[52]

Just as opportunities to travel with their husbands diminished chances for wives to exercise delegated authority at home, the physical separation of home and male work place limited wives' participation in certain aspects of family business or in their husbands' governmental duties. William Preston kept an office at Smithfield in the 1770s in which he conducted his business as surveyor for Montgomery County. His wife, his daughter, and even his aging mother wrote and signed receipts for surveyor's fees. When William's son

John became treasurer of the commonwealth of Virginia in 1809, he established a second residence in Richmond but oversaw the business of the treasurer in a separate treasury building removed from his own household. His wife Eliza exercised supervisory duties over the farm at the Horseshoe in Montgomery County and oversaw the household in Richmond, but she probably had little involvement in the treasurer's office.[53]

The wives of Edward Johnson and John and James Breckinridge were similarly excluded from their husbands' business affairs. Edward Johnson's store in Manchester remained separate from his household and Betsy had little occasion to go there. Lack of specialized knowledge more than physical space excluded the wives of lawyers from participation in their husbands' business affairs. The wives of James and John Breckinridge had almost no involvement in their husbands' legal practices. In 1810 when John wrote to James about provisions for his illegitimate daughter, he noted, "I presume Mrs. Bdg. does not read your letters in Business."[54]

Even though the entrance of elite men into occupations different from those of their fathers limited the ability of their wives to act as deputies, the emergence of the ideal of the republican mother provided women with a familial justification for an interest in politics. Francis Preston's wife Sally and his sister Eliza Madison expressed

a keen interest in his political career. In 1797 Madison wrote to her brother John that "the Family here [Francis's family in Abingdon] are well but all extremely anxious to see you on your way to Russell or some of the back counties, as your presence is thought highly necessary towards your Brother's interest, which I am certain you have as much at Heart as your own and at this period would make greater Exertions than you would for yourself. Indeed it now appears that nothing should be neglected or left undone by his Friends . . . Sister [Sally] Preston is very anxious & confides greatly in you begs you'll advise what plan to fall on in Russell & Lee providing you do not come out & direct Lennard who to send or apply to, to personate Franky in the last mentioned Counties."[55]

The interplay between changing geographical circumstances, changing business practices, and republican ideology limited the extent to which wives could function as their husbands' deputies in society at large. At the same time travel together may have strengthened the emotional bond between some couples and given elite wives a closer look at how government and politics functioned. As wives' abilities to act as delegates for their husbands became curtailed, their role as consorts and advisors (which some had always held) took on increased significance. The diminution of the role of deputy and the elevation of the

role of consort may be interpreted as the rise of the companionate marriage.

NOTES

1. Quotation is from an anonymous poem "To Mr. John Breckinridge and his Lady," 21 June 1785, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 2, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as LC), Washington, D.C. The poem was written at the Stone House; Francis Preston may have been its author.

2. On the variety of roles for wives encompassed in traditional marriages in seventeenth-century New England, see Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750 (New York: Oxford Universty Press, 1980). What I have called the tradition of the active wife closely resembles Ulrich's role of deputy husband, see chap. 2. On the role of consort and advisor, see chap. 6.

3. These definitions are based on those given by Suzanne Lebsock in The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984), pp. 16-19 and 48-53. See also Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1980), pp. 228-238.

4. Robert Douthat Stoner, A Seed-Bed of the Republic: A Study of the Pioneers in the Upper (Southern) Valley of Virginia (Roanoke: Roanoke Valley Historical Society, 1962), p. 287; Will of Sarah Winston Henry, 12 Mar. 1784, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers, vol. 2, LC, mentions no substantive legacy for her daughter Anne. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 3 Dec. 1770, William Fleming Papers (hereafter cited as Fleming Papers), Washington and Lee University Library, Lexington, Va.

5. Ibid. and Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 29 Apr. 1775, ibid.

6. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 17 Jan., 15 Feb., and 15 Mar. 1785, all in ibid.

7. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 18 May 1785, ibid.

8. Ibid. and Will of Wm. Christian, 13 Mar. 1786, Misc. Papers, Filson Club, Louisville, Ky.

9. Wm. Campbell to Wm. Davies, 3 Oct. 1782, in William P. Palmer, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, 1652-1781 (1875-1893; reprint, New York:

Kraus, 1968)10:337. Mary Trigg to Anne Fleming, 12 Jan. 1783, and Anne Christian to Anne Fleming 9 Sept. 1783 and [1784], Fleming Papers.

10. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 29 Apr. 1784, ibid. Israel Christian left Polly and her sister 1,000 acres each, Will of Israel Christian, 12 July 1784, Montgomery Co. Deeds and Wills Bk. A, microfilm, Virginia State Library (hereafter cited as VSL), Richmond.

11. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 29 Apr. 1784, Fleming Papers.

12. Ibid. On Israel Christian's temperament, see Anne Christian to Anne Fleming [1784], and Stephen Trigg to Anne Fleming, 28 July 1773, in ibid.

13. Anne Christian to Wm. Christian, 22 Mar. 1786, Draper Collection 2 U 40 (microfilm edition), State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

14. Joseph A. Waddell, Annals of Augusta County, Virginia, 2nd ed. (Bridgewater, Va.: C.J. Carrier Co., 1902), p. 125; Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, 26 June [1786], Fleming Papers; and John Preston to Francis Preston, 18 May 1786, "Some Letters of John Preston," William and Mary Quarterly (hereafter cited as WMQ), 2d ser., 1 (1921): 44.

15. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, [1786-1787] and 16 May 1787 and Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 1787 and 17 Aug. 1787, Fleming Papers.

16. Will of Wm. Christian, 13 Mar. 1786, Misc. Papers, Filson Club. Quotation from Anne Christian to Anne Fleming [1786-1787], Fleming Papers. See also Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 1787 and 2 Jan. 1788, ibid.

17. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming [1786-1787], ibid.

18. Quotations from Elizabeth Christian to Alexander S. Bullitt [1786-1787] and Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 30 Oct. 1787 and 2 Jan. 1788, ibid. See also Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 1787 and Caleb Wallace to Wm. Fleming, 13 Aug. 1788, ibid.

19. Wm. Fleming to Alexander S. Bullitt, 27 Oct. 1788; Archibald Stuart, Opinion on Israel Christian's Will, 8 Aug. 178[7?]; George Nicholas, Opinion on Israel Christian's Will, 18 Jan. 1791 and Opinion on Elizabeth Christian's estate, 24 Feb. 1790; all in ibid. and Patrick Henry, Opinion on Wm. Christian's Will, 10 Apr. 1789, Autograph

Collection, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville. The men lacked complete faith in Bullitt as well, see Harry Innes to Wm. Fleming, 31 July 1790, Fleming Papers.

20. Stoner, Seed-Bed of the Republic, p. 285 and Lewis Preston Summers, Annals of Southwest Virginia, 1760-1800 (Abindgdon, Va., 1929), p. 71. On Dorothea's infancy see Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 15 February 1785, Fleming Papers. On moving from a centrally located site (along a main road, river ford, or at a crossroads) to a more isolated setting cf. Mary Trigg to Anne Fleming 3 Feb. 1780, ibid. "The man you speak of going to Kentucky I can hear nothing of; I have not had an oportunity to write to Mr. Trigg since November; I live in such an out of the way place that I never see any body only when I go abroad, . . . I hope my dear sister you will not impute my not writing you oftener for carelessness as I nearly have no more oppertunitys than if I was a hermit in a cell."

21. Quotations from Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 17 Aug. 1787 and 2 Jan. 1788, ibid. See also Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, 26 June [1786]; Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 9 May 1787; and Priscilla Bullitt to Elizabeth Christian, 10 Dec. 1788; all in ibid.

22. Stoner, Seed-Bed of the Republic, p. 289.

23. Quotations from Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming, 4 and 7 Sept. 1774, Draper Collection, 2 ZZ 1-2; 10 and 20 Apr. 1780 and 8 Mar. 1790, Fleming Papers.

24. Ibid. On salutations see Anne Fleming to Wm. Fleming, 11 Jan. 1785, ibid.; Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming, 4, 7, 9, and 27 Sept. and 7 and 13 Oct. 1774, Draper Collection, 2 ZZ 1-6 and [1774], 30 Oct. 1778, 15 Dec. 1779, 19 and 20 Apr. 1780, and 23 Sept. and 4 Nov. 1784, Fleming Papers ("My Dr. Nancy"); and 21 Sept., 11 Oct., and 3 and 22 Dec. 1784, 3 Dec. 1789, and 8 Mar. 1790, ibid. ("My Dr. Mrs. Fleming"). Anne Christian always referred to her husband William as "Mr. Christian," but Susanna Preston wrote to "My Dear Billey." William Campbell addressed his wife as "My Dearest Betsey," and Edward Johnson alternately referred to his wife as Betsy, Mrs. Johnson, and "my rib." Susanna Preston to William Preston, 29 Aug. 1778, Preston Family Papers (Mss 1 P9267a), section 3, Virginia Historical Society (hereafter cited as VHS), Richmond; William Campbell to Elizabeth Campbell, 18 Aug. 1776, Campbell-Preston-Floyd Papers. On Anne Christian see p. 192 above; on Edward Johnson see pp. 211-213 above. On the relationship between forms of address and the hierarchy of interpersonal relations, see Ulrich, A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha

Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), pp. 98-99.

25. Harry Innes to Anne Fleming, 2 Jan. 1795, Fleming Papers.

26. Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming, 19 Apr. 1780 and Priscilla Bullitt to Anne Fleming, 2 Mar. 1792, ibid. See also Sarah Warfield to Anne Fleming, 5 Sept. 1794, ibid.

27. Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming, 19 Apr. 1780, ibid. Quotations from Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 22 July 1773 and 20 Nov. 1781, ibid. See also Stoner, Seed-Bed of the Republic, p. 292.

28. Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming 15 Dec. 1779, Fleming Papers.

29. Quotations from Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming, 27 Sept. 1774, Draper Collection, 2 ZZ 5; 21 Sept. 1784, and 3 Dec. 1789, Fleming Papers. See also 7 Sept. 1774, Draper Collection, 2 ZZ 2-3, and 23 Sept. and 22 Dec. 1784, and 3 Dec. 1789, Fleming Papers.

30. Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming, 15 Dec. 1779, ibid.

31. Anne Fleming to [Benjamin Howard, n.d.]; Benjamin Howard to Anne Fleming, 25 May 1802; Anne Fleming to Harry Innes, 15 Aug. 1805; Samuel Wilson to Anne Fleming, 21 Sept. 1806; all in Fleming Papers; and Anne Fleming to Geo. A. Baxter, n.d., Baxter Family Papers, Washington and Lee University.

Only one reference in Fleming's letters can be construed as self-deprecating. In a letter thanking her son-in-law Geo. Baxter for loaning her a promissory note to pay her taxes she refers to Baxter as an "advocate" for the "widow & the fatherless" for his kindness to her. Geo. A. Baxter to Anne Fleming, 20 July 1805, Fleming Papers and Anne Fleming to Anne Baxter, 11 Aug. 1805, Baxter Family Papers.

On Fleming's widowhood see chap. 2 above.

32. Edward Johnson to Wm. Preston, 23 Jan. and 16 Sept. 1773, Preston Family Papers, box 3, VHS.

33. Quotations from Edward Johnson to Wm. Preston, 17 July 1775 and 3 Feb. 1778, Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS. See also 31 July 1776, ibid.

34. Edward Johnson to Wm. Preston, 29 Aug. and 2 Dec. 1779, ibid. The evidence is not sufficient to permit generalizations about whether men or women controlled

decisions about when and how many children a couple would have or whether such decisions were made on the basis of mutual consent. John Breckinridge noted to his brother, who had just named a child in his honor, that "my wife & myself are able & willing yet to discharge in kind such obligations." The statement can be interpreted in two ways --the decision to have additional children was a joint one or Breckinridge presumed to speak for his wife as well as himself. John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 24 Feb. 1804, Breckinridge-Marshall Family Papers, Filson Club.

35. Quotation from Edward Johnson to Wm. Preston, 2 July 1778, Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS. On the impact of non-importation and the Revolution on Johnson's business, see 2 July 1774, 5 Sept. 1775, 16 Dec. 1775, and 31 July 1776, all in ibid.

36. Edward Johnson to Wm. Preston, 29 Aug. 1779, ibid.

37. John Frederick Dorman, The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia (Louisville: Filson Club, 1982), pp. 48-52 and Garland Evans Hopkins, Colonel Carrington of Cumberland (Winchester, Va.: privately issued, 1942), p. 83. I have accepted Dorman as the definitive source on the number of children born to John and Eliza Preston.

38. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 48 and 50-51 and John Preston to John Champ, 9 Jan. 1810, Preston Family Papers-Didier Collection (hereafter cited as Preston-Didier Papers), Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (hereafter cited as VPISU), Blacksburg.

39. Dorman, Prestons, p. 48 and Godfrey Brooks to John Preston, 20 Apr. 1810, Preston-Didier Papers.

40. John Preston to Susanna Preston, 23 May 1810, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection (hereafter cited as Preston-Davie Papers), Filson Club.

41. Ibid., Carlton T. Radford to John Preston, 27 Nov. 1810 and Francis Preston to John Preston, 17 Jan. 1811, both in Preston-Didier Papers.

42. Quotations from Carlton T. Radford to John Preston, 27 Nov. 1810 and Francis Preston to John Preston, 17 Jan. 1811, in ibid.

43. Dorman, Prestons, p. 49 and Susan McDowell to John Preston, 14 May 1811, Preston-Didier Papers.

44. Eliza A. Preston to John Preston, 22 Sept. 1812, ibid. On Eliza's supervisory activities at the Horseshoe see also her letter to John, 9 July 1823, Preston Family Papers-Moore Collection (hereafter cited as Preston-Moore Papers), VPISU.

45. Eliza A. Preston to James McDowell, 18 June 1820, James McDowell Sr. Papers, Alderman Library. For a fuller account of John Preston's career as treasurer see chap. 1 above.

46. Eliza A. Preston to Francis Preston, Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection (hereafter cited as Preston-Gray Papers), Filson Club.

47. Eliza A. Preston to John Preston, 22 Sept. 1812, Preston-Didier Papers.

48. Suzanne D. Lebsock, "Radical Reconstruction and the Property Rights of Southern Women," Journal of Southern History 43 (1977):195-216.

49. The classic statement on republican motherhood is Linda K. Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

50. Francis Preston to Wm. Preston, 28 May 1793, Preston-Gray Papers.

51. Robert Preston to Margaret Preston, 31 Oct. 1818, Preston-Didier Papers.

52. [Eliza Henry Preston], Autobiography, n.d., Preston-Gray Papers and Susanna Preston to James McDowell, 19 Nov. 1816.

53. On Wm. Preston's surveying business see chap. 2 above.

54. Edward Johnson to Wm. Preston, 2 July 1778, Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS and John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 11 May 1796, Papers of James Breckinridge, Alderman Library. On the increasing propensity of men in the backcountry elite to study and practice law after 1780 see chap. 1 above.

55. Eliza Madison to John Preston, 27 Feb. 1797, typescript, Preston-Davie Papers. See also Francis Preston to John Preston, 25 Mar. 1797, Preston-Radford Papers, Alderman Library.

CHAPTER IV

THE TIES THAT BIND: KINSHIP NETWORKS IN BACKCOUNTRY VIRGINIA

A new marriage both created a new nuclear family and bound two extended kinship networks together. Kin made their influence felt within the nuclear family at two crucial junctures: when young adults chose marriage partners and when they became parents. After a child entered adulthood, cousins, aunts, and uncles, as well as parents and siblings, influenced the choice of a marriage partner. When partners became parents, a network of female relatives assisted mothers during childbirth. After a child arrived, he or she took a place within a wider web of kinship. Naming practices initially bound infants to their kin. Nieces, younger siblings, and grandmothers helped mothers and fathers care for young children. As children grew older a range of kin of both sexes had a hand in educating and socializing them. In this way children became fully-integrated members of a regional elite.

"A Mighty Frolick"[1]: The Making of a Marriage

A new marriage marked a transition in the life of the family with broad emotional and economic ramifications. It represented the birth of a new nuclear family and presaged the creation of a new household. It usually bound two previously unrelated families together in one extended kinship network, sometimes changing forever the nature of the emotional and economic relationships among its members. While these changes dramatically affected the two individuals who married, members of their immediate families did not remain untouched by them.

Betsy Breckinridge's courtship and the negotiations surrounding her marriage to Samuel Meredith demonstrate the backcountry elite's concern with both the economic and emotional dimensions of marriage. Betsy's courtship and marriage reflects the mingling of aspects of the traditional and companionate ideals that characterized the marriages of her contemporaries and members of her parents generation. It also indirectly reveals the extent to which eastern and western elites had begun to intermarry before the American Revolution. Finally it highlights the role that family and kin played in the process of mate selection.

No record of Samuel and Betsy's first meeting survives, but the establishment of a marital connection between the Breckinridges on the western side of the Blue Ridge in Botetourt County and the Merediths on the eastern side in

Amherst County came as no surprise. Kinship ties between the western elite and the local gentry of Hanover County had existed for a generation, ever since William Preston married Susanna Smith and three of the five sisters of the Virginia Revolutionary leader Patrick Henry married westerners. Anne married William Christian; Elizabeth initially married William Campbell and after his death became the wife of William Russell; and Susanna married Thomas Madison, a longtime friend of Betsy Breckinridge's uncle William Preston. A fourth sister, Jane, married Samuel Meredith, Sr. of Amherst County and became the mother of Betsy's betrothed. The Christians, Campbells, Madisons, Prestons, and Breckinridges all moved in the same social circle, a circumstance which increased the likelihood that Betsy and Samuel would meet.[2]

By 1784 the two young people were clearly interested in one another. After leaving Samuel Meredith, Sr.'s house in November of that year, John Breckinridge wrote to his mother about his ability to call in cash debts to facilitate Betsy's marriage. "With this I can furnish Betsy or yourself with what you want, her particularly if she requires it. I wish to hear from you both on the occasion. If matters go on to your Expectations, & are reduced to a certainty, pray inform me as quick as possible of it. Any thing that is in my Power shall be willingly satisfied to her, on such an occasion, and I beg she may not conceal her

Intentions from me. Nothing but such an Occasion would induce me to call for this money whic[h] I can safely do. And if it is for such an Occasion, it would come but to no other what ever more chearfully."[3]

The anticipated marriage did not occur immediately. In May 1785 Samuel Meredith, Sr. wrote to John Breckinridge that "a report that Capt. David May, his Wife, and others of Yr. Neighbours, had wrote to me sometime past respecting yr. Sister and had set her character not in so pleasing a point of View as could be supposed to have rendered her agreeable, in case a near connection should have taken place" are "without the least foundation in truth." He reassured Breckinridge that his sister had "always been represented, both to my Wife and me as a Sensible, polite & well accomplished young Lady" and "it would not have given Miss Breckinridge, or any of her friends the least pain or uneasiness to have heard every thing that ever has been told me concerning her." In the eighteenth century a combination of personal integrity and reputation defined a man's "character." Comments about a woman's "character," however, usually referred to her chastity or her behavior with men. Yet this expressed concern for a potential bride's "character" did not preclude premarital sex or other forms of physical intimacy that took place within the context of courtship among at least some members of the eastern Virginia elite. Whether Betsy's activities had impugned her

reputation or whether her family merely feared that she had been the victim of rumor-mongering remains uncertain, although Meredith's letter suggests the latter. Her relationship with Samuel, however, clearly had not proceeded as she expected.[4]

The marriage of Betsy's brother John in the following month brought her into closer contact with the regional elite of the Virginia piedmont. On June 28 he married a neighbor of the Merediths, Mary Hopkins (Polly) Cabell, who lived in nearby Buckingham County. In 1779 Polly's father Joseph Cabell had sold Winton, his Amherst County farm, to Samuel Meredith, Sr. Polly and John lived with her parents in Buckingham during the first year of their marriage, but moved into their own house at the Glebe in Albemarle County in the late Spring or early Summer of 1786. Betsy Breckinridge paid extended visits to her brother and his wife, both at the Cabell's and later at the Glebe, giving the Merediths and other members of the local gentry opportunities to get to know her better. She was with her brother's family in May 1786 and probably stayed until after the birth of Polly's first child the next month. In July Betsy visited the Merediths on her way back to Botetourt. During this visit she and Samuel decided to marry, and he declared his intention to his father.[5]

On July 20, 1786, Samuel Meredith, Sr. initiated negotiations with Letitia (Lettice) Breckinridge concerning

the marriage of their children. He wrote, "I have recd information of my son Samuel's intentions of paying his respects to your daughter . . . I think her a very agreeable young Lady, Should my son appear in the same light to you and the young Peoples regard for each other to be mutual it would only remain necessary that we as parents should join & contribute towards making them easy & happy in their circumstances in Life. This on my part I shall be ready to do. I also suppose that you will be equally willing on yr. part to do the same." Meredith informed Breckinridge that his son owned "five Valuable Negroes independent of me & when he marries provided he has my approbation I shall give him Ten more . . . [and] also a tract of land of a thousand Pounds Value with Household furniture, stock, &c. Yr. Daughter I have been informed had something . . . left her by her Father. I make no doubt but you will liberally contribute also shoul[d] she pleas [place] her affections on a person that is pleasing to you."[6]

On August 10 Samuel wrote to Lettice Breckinridge acknowledging that in the absence of his father his mother had received her letter. Ironically, David May, the clerk of Botetourt who earlier had been accused of spreading unflattering rumors about Betsy, delivered the letter. Jane Henry Meredith was "well pleased with the Contents" and asked her son to "assure" Breckinridge that "the intended Connexion will be exceeding agreeable to her & [she] makes

no doubt but it will be so to my Father also." Samuel and Betsy planned to arrive together at Lettice's house in Botetourt on August 27.[7]

Whether or not Lettice Breckinridge's letter informed Samuel Meredith, Sr. of the size and substance of Betsy's dowry remains undetermined, but her letter to her son John written two weeks later suggests that it was merely a formal indication of her approval of the match. In her private letter to John she confided her reservations. "Mr. Meredith is Paying his respects to your Sister Betsy and I am at a Loss to know what is Best be done. Colo. Meredith has wrot me a Letter about this affair. he Seems much Pleased. I will send you a copy of his Letter that you may see what he intends to give his son and what he wants me to give my Daughter. I have not wrot him a answer to his Letter as yet for I waited for your comming. I beg you will inquire into his [Samuel Jr.'s] Chances."[8]

Concern for Betsy Breckinridge's marriage and marriageability dated from her childhood. Robert Breckinridge's will, written in 1772, provided his young daughter with two female slaves and their increase and a feather bed for her marriage portion. Her mother retained control over the profits of the estate, most of the household goods, and an additional two slaves, all of which she could distribute among her children as she saw fit. Before Betsy entered her teens a family friend,

(Presbyterian?) minister John Lyth, added two tracts of land containing more than 500 acres and an unspecified quantity of cash to her dowry. Upon his departure to serve as chaplain to Colonel William Russell's militia regiment in 1777, Lyth wrote to Betsy's uncle William Preston, "In consideration of the great and many favours I have received from your worthy sister Mrs. Lettice Breckinridge it is my will and pleasure that . . . the promisory notes due to me from Dr. Waller [Walter?] Bennett . . . be paid to miss Betsy Breckinridge . . . when married if agreeable to her Mother . . . . If she . . . whould [sic] not pleas her Mother in Marriage, it must be for your daughter Betty, and if she displease you do with it what you please."[9]

Lyth's attempt to insure that Betsy's mother approved of the man she married focuses attention on the process of mate selection among elite backcountry Virginians. Like most other eighteenth-century Americans, children in western Virginia chose their own spouses, subject to parental approval. Parents rarely withheld their permission. Although Letitia Breckinridge did not wholly approve of her daughter's choice, she did not use her control over Betsy's dowry to block the marriage. In September 1786, she lamented to her son John, "I have Done all I cann to put it [Betsy's marriage] off a Littel longer but the Couple Seemes to wish it some time in this Month. I cannot say that I feall Happy on the occation But as my Deare Betsy seems

Determined [in] Her Choise I have Left here [sic] to act as she t[h]inks fit. I have given my advise on the matter and has tould her every thing I heard concerning him but She is so fixed in her mind that she gives very Little attintion [sic] to any She heares to his his [sic] Disadvantage." Although Lettice continued to voice reservations about Samuel privately to John and Betsy, by early September she had settled an endowment on her daughter that proved substantial enough to satisfy his father. Plans for the wedding proceeded.[10]

Last minute preparations for both bride and groom centered on securing impressive wardrobes. In her letter to John lamenting Betsy's choice of a mate, Lettice noted that Betsy "is very uneassey that she cannot git any thing heare that she wants on this occasion. I thought to have got her some things in Colo. L[ockhart's?] store but did not get any thing that she wanted." She "is in some fears that she will be Dis[sa]poin[t]ed about her Cl[o]eths as she wants to mack a Genteel appearence amonge her new friends." Breckinridge asked her nephew John Preston to buy "6 yeards of pinck colard [colored]" cloth from Mr. Keare in Richmond as well as the list of other items and to get Betsy a "suit maid and sent up."[11]

In Amherst County a similar scenario unfolded. On September 23, Jane Meredith informed Lettice Breckinridge that she could not set out for Botetourt before the 27th of

the month as "Sam meets with some difficulties in getting his [clothes] done." Since Betsy's clothes probably would not arrive from Richmond "so soon as was expected" Meredith hoped that "the second or third day of Octr" would "suit for the Wedding." She politely added, however, that Lettice should "just appoint what day you think proper."[12]

On October 7, 1786, Betsy Breckinridge married Samuel Meredith, Jr. at the house of her mother in Botetourt County. The event marked the culmination of months of intensive negotiations and years of planning. Friends and relatives from throughout the backcountry attended the ceremony. After the celebration Lettice Breckinridge fell "dangerously ill" from "excessive fatigue," presumably brought on by preparations for the wedding.[13]

The couple immediately set off on a wedding trip-- a round of visits with friends and relatives. They stayed first with Samuel's parents in Amherst and later visited Betsy's brother in Albemarle. The final leg of the trip took them back to Botetourt County where Letitia Breckinridge was recovering from her indisposition, which her daughter-in-law Polly Cabell Breckinridge hoped was "nothing more than . . . lonesome[ness] and that of coars Would Mack you very low spirited." Like her brother John, Betsy and her husband then went to live with her inlaws. Upon seeing the couple three months after their wedding, Betsy's aunt Mary Howard observed that they seemed "very

happy" and that she expected "it will be a very agreeable union as there appears a great suitableness in their intellects."[14]

Betsy Breckinridge later had occasion to reflect on the wisdom of having ignored Samuel Meredith's disadvantages. Time confirmed Lettice Breckinridge's doubts about her future son-in-law's ability to manage his financial affairs. After both men and their families had moved to Kentucky in the 1790s, John Breckinridge bailed his brother-in-law out of one of his economic crises by lending him money secured by a mortgage upon very favorable terms. By the time Samuel Meredith Sr. died in the early nineteenth century, his son was ill and once again in financial distress. In 1810 Robert Breckinridge wrote to his half brother James about the plight of their sister. "Mrs. [Meredith] . . . enjoys a tolerable share of health-- she says very little about Mr. M. but he is certainly a dead weight upon her hands. he has talked of going to Virginia ever since the death of his father to settle & receive the estate left him by the old gentleman-- his energy, however will not bear him out-- indeed I recommended it to Betsy to use her influence in preventing his going & to urge him to authorise you or some other person to adjust & receive what is coming from that quarter. Should it fall into his hands its application may not be for the benefit of his family."[15]

A wide array of kin-- siblings, aunts, uncles, and

cousins--influenced a young person's choice of a mate. In 1784 William Smith wrote to his nephew and Betsy Breckinridge's cousin, John Preston, concerning potential marriage partners in his neighborhood (Hanover and Louisa Counties) for his kin. Smith noted that his brother Ballard was "close in age to a Miss Winston, full six feet high with out quishon [cushion] or shoes and large in proportion . . . she is the daughter of follish [foolish] John Winston, but she is a fine girl with seventeen negroes & five hundred pounds cash the day she marries, this I think will suit the doctor [Ballard] well, & he may get her without much trouble & less expence as she don't live but one mile from my mothers['']." John's cousin Betsy Smith, William added, had recently "married & very well to Mr. Pusey, rich and young." He asked Preston to "let cousin Sally [John's sister] noe I have got a sweat worte [sweet word] for as much a gentleman with a good fortune" for her. "Cousin Betsy [the widow Eliza Preston Madison, John's sister] says she don't want to be married, so that I have omitted making [a] search for her, but will bring a suiter for her when I come up." The Preston and Breckinridge cousins commented on marriage and potential mates in their letters to each other to such an extent that in 1788 John Breckinridge informed his brother James that he was willing to correspond on any subject "but Court Ships and its attendants."[16]

As William Smith's letter suggests, the most common way

of balancing economic and emotional considerations was to limit the pool of potential partners to others of approximately the same social rank. Even within the group, however, the reputation of the individual helped determine his or her suitability as a mate. Letitia Breckinridge doubted Samuel Meredith Jr.'s ability to manage his wealth, and someone questioned Betsy Breckinridge's "character." In the end the final decision about whom to marry appears to have been left to the two individuals involved. Samuel Meredith informed his father of his choice, and Betsy Breckinridge steadfastly refused to hear anything to Samuel's "Disadvantage". Personal affection and physical attraction determined their choice; they married for love.

Even though the marriage was based on affection, a formal tone characterized the negotiations surrounding it. The settling of marriage portions on the partners, the concern that they be impressively attired, and even the careful negotiation of the date reveal the ritualistic aspects of marriage among the elite. This formality should not be interpreted as an absence of emotion on the part of those involved, however. The contrast between Letitia Breckinridge's official letter to Samuel Meredith's parents expressing her pleasure at the proposed match and her private letter to her son lamenting her daughter's choice reveals the churning emotions that lay beneath the formality of eighteenth-century etiquette.

"Present us with a Stranger"[17]: Children among the Elite

Procreation occupied a central place in the backcountry elite's view of marriage. With the birth of a child spouses took on additional roles as mothers and fathers. These new roles not only reshaped the ways husbands and wives related to each other, but also reinforced the ties of parents and their offspring to a wider community of kin. Members of this community assisted parents in rearing and educating their children.

For women marriage usually introduced an unrelenting cycle of pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing. For the unlucky, like Anne Fleming, the cycle was often punctuated by miscarriages and stillbirths. Given the proportion of their adult lives during which married women were either pregnant or nursing, these activities interfered remarkably little with their other duties. Anne Fleming continued to manage Belmont during her husband's long absences in spite of her fourteen pregnancies, and Mary Radford Preston and Eliza Mayo Preston continued to supervise the domestic economies of their households until shortly before their confinements. The later stages of pregnancy did severely curtail a woman's ability to travel on horseback, however, and that remained an important mode of transportation in southwestern Virginia before 1790.[18]

Men and women viewed pregnancy and childbirth differently. Prospective fathers were generally pleased by their wives' pregnancies, which they saw as proof of their own manhood, and they regarded childbirth as a routine and relatively benign natural process. Edward Johnson perceived his wife's labors as comparatively "quick and easie" and discounted the severity of her repeated complaints of "sore breasts." In a letter to his brother-in-law William Preston, Johnson remarked that he was sorry to hear that his sister-in-law (Preston's wife) had "been ill, but hope with you her disorder may be what you Expect & that the usual period will bring it to happy Issue."[19]

Husbands rarely expressed concerns about the risks of childbirth for their wives, unless serious complications arose, and even then most were inclined to minimize the difficulties. In August 1774, Susanna Preston fell ill five weeks after the birth of her son. Two months later her husband William wrote to his sister with obvious relief. "My poor Sukey is so far recovered that she rode with me a mile the other Day, and my little James Patton, whom I have got Christened by Mr. Cummins is right hearty. Between his Mammy, Catty Robinson, & a sucking Bottle he makes out pretty well." Preston's concern appears to have been as much or more for the survival of his son as for that of his wife. Upon the birth of his first child, Susanna Preston's grandson James McDowell wrote to his father that "Mama and

Mrs. Preston [his mother-in-law, Sarah Campbell Preston] very unexpectedly broke upon our solitude a week ago. Susan [his wife] needed them much as her confinement though never dangerous has been some what afflicting."[20]

Not surprisingly, women viewed pregnancy and especially childbirth with considerably more anxiety and trepidation. They relied on a network of female kin both to assuage their fears and to assist with the birth. Anne Christian saw that her sister-in-law Anne Fleming was informed of the safe outcomes of her pregnancies. In April 1772 she wrote, "I have the pleasure of informing you that i was safely deliver'd of a fine daughter on friday the 27th of March, thanks be to the Lord, I have been extreemly well since & have had a most mercifull time of it, which God grant I may never forget." In May 1780 Christian sent word to Fleming through their brother-in-law that she "got up very well" after the birth of her son. Christian proved solicitous in November of the following year when Fleming endured a more difficult delivery to give birth to a daughter.[21]

In May 1786, Lettice Breckinridge noted to her son John, "I hope by the last of June my Dear Polly [John's wife] will be over her Dificulty [pregnancy] and perfectly recovered." In early July after the birth of Polly's child, her mother-in-law revealed the source of her anxieties and the fear that underlay most women's dread of childbirth. "I cannot express the Joy I felt on the hearing of my Deare

Polly being safe delivered of a fine Daughter," Lettice wrote, "and that she so well recovered. the happy news eased my mind of many fears Least she would have shared the fait of her Poor sister Betty but we all have reason to be thankfull to God that it is not the Case." Polly's older sister Betty had died during the birth of her first child fifteen years earlier. In August 1787 Lettice's own daughter Betsy Meredith, then in an advanced stage of pregnancy, wrote to her mother to "let nothing prevent you from comeing to see me this fall as I never wisht to see you so much in my life."[22]

The letters of the backcountry elite do not reveal who presided at the lying in or even whether most women relied on doctors or midwives to deliver their babies. They do show, however, that at least one female relative came to offer assistance and give support during the birth. Women seem to have preferred the presence of their own mothers, but mothers-in-law, sisters, sisters-in-law, and nieces also came for the event. Anne Christian's mother, Sarah Winston Henry, was with her in 1772 when she gave birth to her daughter Sarah Winston. In 1781 Elizabeth Christian probably went directly from the delivery of her daughter Anne Fleming to that of her daughter-in-law Anne Christian. Polly Cabell gave birth to her first child at the home of her parents, but she requested that her sister-in-law Betsy Breckinridge come for an extended visit in the later stages

of her confinement and remain with her until after the child's birth. Betsy obliged. Whether or not Polly reciprocated the following year remains unknown, but Betsy's mother-in-law Jane Meredith and probably her own mother were in attendance. In 1803 Letitia Preston stayed with her sister Susanna in Kentucky until her "critical situation," the birth of her child, had passed. Eliza Preston, twenty-year-old daughter of Francis, "with great affection and solicitude watched over" her aunt Margaret Preston "night and day" after Margaret, who was suffering from measles, gave birth to a son.[23]

Despite the anxiety pregnancy and childbirth generated for women, mothers, fathers, and extended kin all greeted the safe arrival of a new infant with delight. In July 1788 Joseph Cabell wrote to his son-in-law John Breckinridge upon the birth of a second Breckinridge child. "George [Breckinridge's slave] came in a powerfull Rain . . . Last Night with the most Pleasing news of my Dr. childs being Safely Delivered of a fine son, and being as WELL as Could be Expected in her situation, May that kind Profidence continue So and Bless yr fine son with Every Virteous principle make him a good Man, Render him Servisal [sic] to his Countery [sic] and be a Credit to his Parents." At about the same time John's sister Elizabeth Meredith wrote to their mother, "My Dear Little Jane grows fast and is [a] fine promising child and hope if she lives will be a grate

comforte to me."[24]

Some relatives noted the resemblance of newborns to other kin. In 1786 Rosanna Wallace wrote to her mother from Kentucky, "my little Priscey is a midling fat child and the pickter of Billey." "Billey" was probably one of her nephews, either young William Christian or young William Fleming. Nearly two decades later Eliza Madison told her sister-in-law Mary Radford Preston that "My Grandson Ben Howard who now engrosses a great deal of my attention & a vast deal of my love is a wonder in the country he lives in for . . . [his] loveliness; he bears a great resemblance of your Wm. which I believe endears him the more to me."[25]

Even more than remarks about their physical resemblance to existing kin, the names of infants bound them to a larger network of extended kin. After the birth of his daughter, John Breckinridge wrote to his mother Letitia, "The Child grows finely . . . There is great Consultation & deliberation about its Name. We have not certainly fixed on it yet; but expect it will be called Letitia Preston: I am entirely easy about it, hoping that I shall have enough of them; & if so; that my mother's memory shall not be forgotten." John need not have worried. Letitia Preston Breckinridge's namesakes included at least three granddaughters and one niece.[26]

When John Breckinridge named his daughter for his mother, he was following a practice common to both his

contemporaries and members of his parents' generation. Each of Letitia Preston Breckinridge's four siblings named his or her first child for a parent. Letitia was the sole exception, she named her eldest son William for her brother; John, her second son, became his grandfather's namesake. Letitia's children and their cousins continued the practice of memorializing their parents by naming their children for them. Twenty of the twenty-eight grandchildren of John and Elizabeth Patton Preston named their first child for one of their own or a spouse's parent. William Preston's wife Susanna Smith had no fewer than six granddaughters named Susanna Smith and one named Susanna Preston.[27]

After their grandparents, the relatives for whom children were most often named included their parents' siblings, aunts and uncles, and cousins. The practice of naming children for friends became more common after the Revolution, as did the practice of naming them for Revolutionary heroes or others whom the parents admired but might not know personally. Triple names also proliferated.[28]

In 1811 Francis Preston wrote to his mother Susanna concerning a name for his newborn son. "We have never given our New Born a name untill to day and it seems to be with the consent of the family that he should be Called James to which I am desposed to add Madison, as I hope he will emulate his virtues and greatness and some day fill the chair which the Gentleman does whose name I wish to embrace.

I suppos [sic] or rather fear Brother James will not receive as a Compliment this name as the addition is intended, but so far as it relates to all my family he may be assured it is for him, and as to my own feelings on the Subject he may Judge of it as such him, if I say my principal intention is for him, it would look like bartering for a name myself which is not my wish or expectation from any quarter."[29]

The name was also intended to honor Francis's cousin James Breckinridge, an avowed Federalist, as Francis explained in a letter written a month later. "My family are in good health to which a fine Boy was added about ten weeks ago, whom I call for you except that I have made a small addition as we are fond of tripple names, which however may excite your Jealousy a little, and be a reason for witholding your consideration when you are told it is Madison, but if it does I am sure it will only be your political consideration, which judging from my own feelings and a perfect knowledge of your as I believe, will never interrupt the private consideration of friendship between us or our Children."[30]

The fact that little James Madison Preston was named for a sitting President, his uncle, and a cousin might imply a limited personal bond between a child and the person honored with a namesake, but the bond could be very strong. In 1782 Anne Christian wrote to her sister-in-law Anne Fleming, "my kindest Love and Compliments to col. Fleming,

Leney and the little Girls, I long to see my little namesake the most of any and Prissie the next, pray dear Sister bring up all the children along with you."[31]

If they had a large number of children, parents often got around to naming one or two for themselves. As Francis Preston explained, however, custom decreed that the child named for his father should be among the last, not the first. "I have the Pleasure to inform you that yesterday three weeks Mrs. Preston added to my family a very fine Boy whose name she says shall be Francis, I object to this streneously as it is the general understanding that the child is to receive the fathers name when the prospect of future increase is passed, this is so far from the case in the present instance that I can by no means subscribe to the name." The Prestons compromised and named their third child Francis Smith Preston for his uncle and great-grandfather.[32]

The naming practices of twelve of Francis Preston's brothers and first cousins who named sons for themselves give credence to his observation. For four of the twelve, the child bearing the father's name was the youngest child. In no circumstance was the child born earlier than fourth in the birth order and he was usually the fifth, sixth or seventh child, if not the last. Although Francis and Sarah Campbell Preston's fourteenth and last child was a daughter, not a son, Margaret Buchanan Frances Preston did indeed bear her father's name.[33]

Mothers bore the principal burden of caring for infants and young children. Nowhere in the correspondence of the backcountry elite is the joy and tedium of motherhood more clearly revealed than in the letters that Anne Christian wrote to her sister-in-law Anne Fleming in the 1770s and 1780s. Christian provided her reader with glimpses of her role as mother interspersed with accounts of other activities in her life. In December 1770, shortly after the birth of her first child Christian noted, "I write with prissey on my knee so you must make allowances." In January 1771, she added in a post script, "I write in a hurry early, in the mourning, & it is very cold, & Prissey is crying &c." In January of the following year Christian boasted to Fleming that "you will be surprized to hear how your little Neice Prissey will chatter to you." After Prissey's sister Sally was born in March 1772, Christian wrote, "my little daughter [Sally] takes up chief of my Time nursing her, & now & then Prissey, who I cannot cast off yet." By June an exasperated Christian maintained, "I can scarce make out to write a single word as Sally is crying, & Prissey is hanging on me to take her, so I must conclude writing."[34]

By January 1775, a third daughter, Betsy, had been added to the family. Christian wrote to her sister-in-law that "Poor Prissie is sick & Bettsey cross with her disorder [an inflamed ear] but hope she will get well before long." The brief letter concluded with the observation that "the

children are pulling at me & so cross, I doubt you'l scarce read this far." In 1780, after the birth of her son William, Christian noted," I must not forget to tell you about my Great Boy, He is called a mere Monster for Size, He is really the heaviest Child I ever felt of his age, & thank the Lord is very healthy & quiet." After the birth of her last child Dorothea in 1785, while Christian's husband was planning the family's move to Kentucky, she closed her letter to Fleming by observing that "I am writing with Dorothea in my arms which makes me obliged to conclude with kindest love to your dear little girls."[35]

Although she did not explicitly catalog the duties of motherhood, Anne Christian's letters clearly establish that backcountry mothers nursed and nurtured their own children. Christian had difficulty weaning two-year-old Prissey, even after the birth of Sally. She also served as the principal healer in her household, periodically consulting her brother-in-law, the physician William Fleming, about medicines for the various maladies of her children.[36] Finally, Christian's letters indicate that she was responsible for soothing ruffled tempers and easing the stresses of childhood. No wonder she was thankful that William was both "healthy and quiet."

While mothers bore the brunt of infant care, fathers also participated in some of the nurturing aspects of childrearing. Many years after the fact, Eliza Henry

Preston recalled playing with her father's hair as a small child and remembered his affectionate and indulgent response. "His light brown hair was long and plaited and tucked up with a small comb it was my children's [childhood's?] delight to reach up while he sat reading and comb and twirl and play with it which he patiently endured for hours." In 1798 Elizabeth Fleming Ramsey, by this time living in Tennessee, wrote to her mother Anne Fleming about her difficulty in nursing her newborn daughter. Ramsey noted that she had found "a negro girl of colo. Ramsey's [her father-in-law] to nurse for me" and that "Mr. Ramsey is very fond of nursing his daughter [with a bottle] and very good at the business." John Breckinridge duly noted his young daughter's persistent colic in a letter to his mother in 1786. "Your granddaughter grows finely & is very healthy but much afflicted with the Belly ach." Two decades later Nathaniel Hart wrote to his brother-in-law John Preston that "We are all in good health except our little son who is a good deal indisposed from teething, he now appears on the mend and I hope in a few days will be entirely recovered."[37]

Fathers proved especially sensitive to the illnesses of their children, and a sick child provided sufficient cause to delay travel plans. When the Reverend John Brown's son Ebenezer fell ill in 1773, his father interrupted a preaching tour "thro Jackson's Country and Pot's Creek & went [only] as far as Carr's Creek." When William Fleming's

teenaged son Leonard became ill on a journey to Kentucky with his father, Fleming wrote to his wife that "Lenny had his fitt on the road, to day he is so unwell that he can not proceed, if it pleases the Almighty to take of[f] the fever he will return [home] tomorrow and i will go forward . . . . O, my Dr. consider the situation I am under, to leave my Child at such a distance from home, so unwell-- but I trust in the Almighty." Fleming left Lenny behind, and the boy returned safely home while his father proceeded to Kentucky. When Fleming's return to Virginia was delayed, he again wrote to his wife. "This will reach you about the time [I] Expected to be at home but my affairs . . . I found in much confusion . . . [and know] not with certainty [when] I may return, My heart is at home. I will loose no time." He inquired after Lenny's health and added, "my other little ones I hope are well it is for their benefit I am at a distance from them & not obliged with their little prattle this Christmas."[38]

The death of a son or daughter revealed the deep emotional attachments of fathers to their children. In 1780 Edward Johnson wrote to his brother-in-law William Preston that "Mrs. Johnson is at present much distressed from the dangerous Situation of our youngest son, he got Scalded Eight days ago and has had ever since a Violent inflamation on the Brain which frequently renders him distracted (& his mother is little better from the tender anxiety of a mother

& the want of sleep) he is blistered from head to foot & has been taking Laud[nu]m & Musk but as yet nothing can be said Certainly respecting his recovery." While Johnson's letter clearly shows that his wife bore the chief responsiblity of caring for their sick child and hints at the sentimentalization of motherhood, the detail in which he describes the situation to Preston suggests that he was actively involved in caring for his son. Shortly after the child's death, Johnson informed Preston that "I have labored under a most drole & disagreeable disorder ever since I lost my boy (slow fevers) that has taken away my strength & altered my colour to that of a person that has the Jaundice tho' I am told it is not the Jaundice. I for some time was quite absent & coud not remem[be]r for a Second, I have had thro[ughou]t the whole a bad pain on my right side which obliges me to write only at Particular Spells of ease." Only settling his wife in the country prevented Johnson from visiting the warm springs to recover.[39]

In 1782 Preston lost one of his own children, thirteen-year-old Ann, who probably died of smallpox. Preston's brother-in-law, the Reverend John Brown encouraged him not to look only at the "dark side of the cloud." "One out of ten is taken from you but there yet remains a loving wife & an affectionate mother over them to comfort you . . . if you ballance your comfort with your afflictions the former will outweight the Latter. I need not proceed on this melancholy

topic. Your own good sense will furnish you thoughts more suitable than I can suggest." A few weeks later Preston lamented the loss in a letter to his sister Lettice Breckinridge. "I need not multiply words to describe my Feelings to a [person so ex]tremely tender as I know you to be." Yet Preston resigned himself to "Divine Providence" and began to plan with Breckinridge for the innoculation of the remainder of his children and her sons.[40]

Brown himself had lost three sons in quick succession during the preceding decade. In November 1771, he asked Preston to "Make some purchases of land for my yongst boys . . . [on] a good Tract of Land where there is a prospect of a Congregation whether at New River, at Reed Creek or Holston." In March 1772, he noted, " . . . My 3 sons have taken possession of their worldly inheritance a few feet of ground contain their Remains. And I humbly hope they have taken possession of the Inheritance of the saints above, where they are employed in a more exalted Exercise than they cou'd possibly be on earth. The more of our dear Relations that are gone before us, ought to be Exceitments to us to prepare for the grand event. I can scarcely think that there are any of the fathers Race under greater obligations to the glory of God than myself."[41]

In his grief Edward Johnson became physically ill, his powers of concentration diminished. When illness or death struck their children, Preston, Brown, and Fleming took

comfort from their Presbyterianism and belief in the controlling hand of "Divine Providence." After the Revolution the religious uniformity of the immigrant elite and their descendants broke down. Some remained Presbyterians, while others embraced newer evangelical sects like the Methodists and Baptists. Still other members of the western elite, like some of their eastern counterparts who had been influenced by enlightenment thought, abandoned their belief in divine providence altogether. Bereaved fathers who denied the supernatural aspects of christianity found themselves deprived of the comfort of religion. After the death of his son George in 1808, John Floyd lamented to his brother-in-law James McDowell, "To suppose a man to be unaffected or unmindful of those distresses which come nearest to him; is supposing him to be more or less than **man**. It has been said that 'there is a time for all things.' I hope this may be tru: but it seems like the assurance of life everlasting and perpetual happiness beyond the grave which, pardon me my dear friend, is almost too good news to be true. . . . my son; my dear little George is no more."[42]

Because of the deep affection parents felt for their children, they generally proved reluctant to leave them, except in the care of trusted relatives. In March 1780 Mary Trigg informed her sister Anne Fleming that "I intended down to Botetourt this spring but was disappointed in my hope of

getting my boys to school and can't think of leaving them till their Father comes in which I don't expect until the last of May." Neither slaves nor private tutors were considered acceptable parental substitutes,[43] but children became acquainted with a wide array of kin as potential parental surrogates early in life. Expectant mothers sent for nieces, younger siblings, or other female relatives to assist them with the care of infants and young children. Shortly before the birth of her second child in 1776, Betsy Smith Johnson sent for her sister's niece Betsy Preston Smith. Johnson probably had met fourteen-year-old Betsy Smith while visiting her sister, Susanna Preston. Johnson also expected Preston's fourteen-year-old daughter Eliza to come stay with her in the Fall.[44]

Three decades later Anne Baxter wrote to her mother, Anne Fleming, shortly after the birth of her son that he "grows very fast and is a very good Child. he is almost as pretty as his Aunt Dolly. She must come and see him. Sister Polly [probably a sister-in-law] is with me yet and wishes sister Prisey to come down very much. Dear Mammy you certainly can spare one of them now you have got Jenney Williams with you." Both Anne Baxter's unmarried sisters and Betsy Johnson's young kin were to assist the new mothers in caring for their children. In this way they gained familiarity with a role that most of them would assume later in life.[45]

Grandmothers also became important figures in the lives of young children. In addition to being present at the births of their grandchildren, grandmothers who lived nearby sometimes served as parental substitutes. Between 1800 and 1805 Sidney and George, the sons of Anne Baxter, periodically stayed with their grandmother Anne Fleming at Belmont. During the same time period Anne Fleming's youngest son John lived with his sister and her husband George Baxter in Lexington. His brother-in-law served as president of Washington College, which John attended. Anne Fleming's letters to her daughter reveal how the two little boys developed strong emotional bonds with their grandmother, aunts, and uncles, as well as to their parents. After little George's bout with measles, Fleming wrote to her daughter, "he is now verry healthy & well the greatest trouble with him is to keep [him] from running about too much. his confinement in the house & carrying him about seemed to renew his desire of being more out of doors . . . since I began to write he is come to tell me he is working in the garden he want a drink & a pice-- now off he goes with his train after him." Apparently George's fever affected his memory. he "seems not to remember anything about home only when he hears the family mentioned he talks about brother William & his Tom[a]ha[w]k. yet I think he would know any off you. he is verry fond of any boys he sees about Johneys size & sometimes call Unkle Jony. I

never left him a night only last sunday & he asked for Mammy when the[y] first came from Meeting & then stuck close to Aunt Prisey & was a very Good child. Pr[isey] carried him to meeting at James Meeting house the sabath before which pleased him verry much."

During his visit in the Fleming household, George developed close ties to his grandmother and his Aunt Prisey. His relationship with his uncle Johnny seems to have developed in his own house, where Johnny was living. In 1803 Anne Fleming wrote to Johnny that "George is very well & talks about pa & ma & brother Sidney. [He] says he will go and see them when Granma goes & come[s] home again."[46] George's brother Sidney also spent time at his grandmother's house, as did his cousins Patrick and Nancy. Anne Fleming cared for Sidney when he suffered from malaria in 1805. Upon his recovery she wrote to his mother that Sidney "seems as happy as aney child can be and every one of the family is fond of him, I cant get him to stay in as much as I wished. he gets sun burnt. he never goes out of the yard or garden without his aunt or me with him, but is so fond of play he will be out & the little negroes is very fond of him."[47]

The pattern of having children reside in the households of their kin, sometimes for extended periods of time, was by no means confined to Anne Fleming's household nor to the early nineteenth century. Although correspondence provides only glimpses of residential patterns for children among the

backcountry elite, this evidence suggests that children were comfortable with a wide array of parental surrogates. In the event of the death of one or both of their parents, these kinship ties took on additional significance, but grandmothers, aunts, uncles and adult siblings also held important places in the lives of children whose parents were alive and healthy.

Among the Christian extended family children regularly resided with kin. Israel and Elizabeth Christian's youngest daughter Rosanna (Rosey) spent time in the households of all her adult siblings during the 1770s. Although Rosey's "permanent" residence presumably was with her parents, she stayed with her brother William and his wife from January through March 1770. She also spent part of the winter of 1771 in William's house. January 1772 found her in the household of her sister Mary Trigg and her husband Stephen. By June, Rosey was back at William's house but making preparations to return to the Triggs. During the Indian uprisings on the frontier that led to the expedition to Point Pleasant in 1774, she and her mother and possibly her father stayed with her sister Anne Fleming at Belmont. Israel and Elizabeth, William and Anne Christian, and Mary and Stephen Trigg all lived near one another in the New River valley. Belmont stood some thirty-five miles to the east.[48]

A decade later the Christian, Trigg, and Fleming

cousins traversed greater distances to spend time in each other's houses. Prissey and Sally Christian, ages eleven and nine, passed November and December 1781 in the Trigg household, now located on the Holston River, some 150 miles to the southwest of their parents' house. In 1783 they travelled thirty-five miles in the opposite direction for an extended visit with the Flemings. In 1784 and 1785 Betsy Fleming lived with her aunt and uncle, Anne and William Christian, where she studied with her cousins under their tutor.[49]

Patterns of co-residence for children often centered around provisions for their educations. At least part of Rosey Christian's time in her brother's house was devoted to her formal education. Arrangements like those for Betsy Fleming-- where cousins lived under the same roof and shared the same tutor-- were not unique. In the 1770s, for example, the Breckinridge and Preston cousins studied together under a single tutor at Smithfield.[50] Sometimes children lived with relatives while attending schools distant from their homes. In the mid-1770s James Breckinridge studied at the academy kept by his uncle, the Reverend John Brown. In the early 1800s John Fleming lived with his sister Anne Baxter and her husband George, president of Washington College. In 1815 Francis Preston's son William lived with his Uncle John in Richmond. John Preston also oversaw living arrangements for Francis's

daughters Eliza and Susan, who boarded in other houses.[51]

Even when children did not actually live with relatives, the act of sending them away to school sometimes entailed the participation of several of their adult kin. In 1777 William Preston and his sister Lettice Breckinridge cooperated in preparing and transporting their sons and their belongings to school. The most revealing illustration of the role that kin could play in facilitating the education of a child, however, is found in an examination of William Radford Preston's journey to Mr. Crutchfield's school.[52]

In May 1810, eleven-year-old William Radford Preston lived with his widowed father John in Richmond where he attended an English school with his younger brother. One year later, at the time of his father's remarriage, William Radford was living in the house of his aunt and uncle, Sarah and James McDowell, located between Staunton and Lexington, Virginia. On May 16, 1811, John Preston wrote to his son to "prepare yourself to go to Mr. Crutchfield's school in Bath County." Preston first instructed his son to "take an affectionate leave of your very good & kind Uncle & Aunt who have been so uniformly your sincere friends & protectors & always return a gratefull recollection of the obligations they have laid you under & be ever prompt to acknowledge their singular favours. Part with your cousins upon the best terms of genuine friendship & resolve through[out life]

to cherish it with arder & disinterestedness."[53]

After taking leave of his relations, William Radford was to "progress as fast as you can to Lexington where in the same manner part with your relations & friends then go without delay to Greenfield [John Preston's farm in Botetourt County] and there get a horse . . . & go on to Smithfield [the farm of John Preston's mother]; when you arrive there your Cousin Linnaus Smith (or Uncle James P. if he is present) will inform you what arrangements and preparations are making for you, John, Whitly, [his brothers] and Lysander [a cousin] to go to Mr. Crutchfield's school." The preparations included retrieving the "cloth and books . . . which your Uncle Tommy Davis took up" and going "by your Aunt Madison's [to] stay a night with her . . . [as] she will advise you what you stand in need of and where it can be got." Preston noted that "Your uncle McDowell will furnish you with as much money as he may think is necessary for your [travel] expenses." Preston cautioned his son, "I must beg you not to delay your journey by turning off the road or stopping at any place except as I have mentioned & in your whole rout & also when you are at Smithfield I will expect to hear that you have conducted yourself in a manly, honorable, decent & becoming manner; & not contrary to be civil & polite to every person you [meet] with."[54]

William Radford Preston received the assistance of no

fewer than four of his aunts and uncles in the course of his journey to Mr. Crutchfield's school. Alone and separated from his father, the twelve-year-old made the journey from his uncle's house to school by being passed from hand-to-hand along a network of extended kin. Two brothers and a cousin accompanied him to boarding school. The fact that all four wrote to John Preston on the same sheet of paper suggests that they maintained close connections at school. William Radford's letters home closed by asking his father to "Please to Give my love to Grandmother and all my Uncles, Aunts, and Cousins."[55]

The account of William Radford's journey not only illustrates the extent to which contact with kin pervaded the lives of many elite backcountry children, but also provides insights into the relationship between "family" and "friends" in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. When John Preston urged his son to view his aunt and uncle McDowell as "friends & protectors," he used the term friend in much the same way that lawyers of the period used it-- to indicate one who representated the interests of another, often a minor or married woman, who legally could not speak for him or herself. Preston also wished to impress upon his son that the "protection" his aunt and uncle had given him laid William Radford under an obligation to return the favor should his relatives someday stand in need of it. The "friendship" John Preston advised his son

to pursue with his cousins was that of a relationship among equals based on mutual respect and affection. This definition of friendship more closely resembles the modern meaning of the term, and was the kind of reciprocal, if non-obligatory, relationship most likely to be pursued with those who were not relatives.[56]

John Preston expected his son to behave in a "manly, honorable, decent & becoming manner . . . [and] to be civil & polite to every person." The quality he most prized in his daughters, however, was "attentiveness."[57] Differing educational opportunities for boys and girls mirrored the differing expectations society held for them, differences reinforced by their parents and by a wide array of kin. Although opportunities for formal schooling among the backcountry elite expanded for both boys and girls after the Revolution, the gains for boys far outstripped those for girls.

As Francis Preston's daughter Eliza Henry Preston noted in her memoir, young brothers and sisters sometimes studied together under the same tutor. "My brother was a year & [a] half older than I-- We were educated together. We had a private teacher a man of uncommon learning . . . . My father employed him and he became a treasure to us-- Greek, latin, French and English were as familiar to him as common topics of the day." Yet in addition to the tutor, Eliza's father "also procured for me a German Music teacher."[58]

The educations of Eliza and her brother William Campbell Preston diverged more sharply at adolescence. "When I was twelve year[s] old My Father thought it best to send us to public [i.e. private] school and we were sent to Lexington. My brother to college for which he was prepared even at that early age . . . I was placed in the Ann Smith Academy then but two years old." Eliza briefly compared her own and her brother's educational experiences in Lexington. She noted that Washington "College was then under the Presidency of Dr. Baxter and must have been an excellent school." Of the Ann Smith Academy, she recalled that "Miss Ann Smith . . . was a little nice looking old lady . . . strict in her requirements-- somewhat pedantic but upon the whole a very suitable character for the situation. There were good teachers under her and I think the scholars made good progress . . . . Previously daughters had only the instruction that could be secured at leisure or from the common neighborhood school-- but here young ladies were prepared for teaching the higher branches and carried these accomplishments into private families when still the praiseworthy old fashioned prejudices of domestic learning were kept up."[59]

Eliza Henry Preston proved both a shrewd observer and a capable student in learning the lessons of formal schooling and informal socialization. She set a standard for her younger cousins to emulate. In 1810 her uncle John Preston

observed in a letter to his mother that his own daughter, also named Eliza, "is a most attentive child & I cannot give a better description of her than by saying . . . that she is the equal to my Brother Francis daughter Eliza both as to attention & capacity."[60]

Eventually Eliza Henry Preston's parents decided on a less innovative school for their daughter. As she recalled, "Something more was necessary to satisfy the ambitions of My parents. I must have the City Polish. So I was sent to Richmond and placed in one of its best schools-- Music, dancing and french were the primary objects, and there under the instruction of Mr. La Forte . . . I first learned to appreciate the beauties of Corneille, Racine, and other Standard works in the French language."[61]

Young men and women like Eliza and her brother were aware of the differing educational opportunities for men and women and of the underlying reasons for the differences. Conrad Speece, a teacher at Washington College in the 1790s, explained the rationale in a discourse on the "superficial manners of the fair sex" addressed to his betrothed, Polly Hanna. According to Speece, the "Character of superficiality is by no means applicable to the whole sex. . . . the fair sex are not at all [de]ficient in natural Genius. Their desire of Knowledge is generally strong and when rightly directed is often productive of the most pleasing effects. In short, they are capable of high

advances in Knowledge and great Refinement of Taste."[62]

For Speece the problem of female superficiality lay not in "any peculiarity in their Constitution but rather to what I shall call their Education." Girls learned early "that it must be their chief business in Life to render themselves agreeable to the other Sex. How this Rule of Conduct is first infused I shall not pretend to determine. It may perhaps owe its orgin to the Instructions of parents, and perhaps in a still greater degree to the Influence of Example." In any event, men proved ultimately responsible for the superficiality of manners in women. For once they had internalized the principle that their first obligation was to please men, women inquired, "What are the Qualifications necessary to render them agreeable?" Speece wrote that he was "sorry to observe that even Gentlemen [of C]onsiderable knowledge frequently discover too great a Regard for excessive polish of Behaviour & Gaiety of appearance."[63]

Extended kin networks played a significant role in the lives of elite backcountry families. Kin influenced the process of mate selection, and as a couple became a family the bearing and rearing of children took place within a supportive web of kinship. Mothers, sisters, sisters-in-law, and nieces gathered to assist in childbirth. Naming

practices helped link newborns to particular relatives within their extended kin network and reaffirmed ties between adult siblings and cousins. Grandmothers sometimes played important roles in caring for young children, and aunts and uncles assisted both nieces and nephews in persuing their educations. Close ties with extended kin probably provided additional security for children whose own parents died before they reached adulthood, but such ties often developed and flourished during their parents' lifetimes. Together, parents and kin helped children learn the modes of behavior that society considered appropriate for persons of their sex and station in life. In this way little "strangers" became fully integrated into their own extended kinship networks and into the larger society.

NOTES

1. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 10 Nov. 1781, William Fleming Papers (hereafter cited as Fleming Papers), Washington and Lee University Library, Lexington, Va. The phrase describes the wedding of Rhoda Ingles and Byrd Smith.

2. John Frederick Dorman, The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia (Louisville, Ky.: Filson Club), pp. 12-13 and William Wirt Henry, Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence and Speeches, vol. 2 (1891; reprint, New York: Burt Franklin, 1969), appendix I.

3. John Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, 17 Nov. 1784, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 2, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as LC), Washington, D.C.

4. Samuel Meredith to John Breckinridge, 30 May 1785, ibid. On courtship practices in eastern Virginia, see J.A. Leo Lemay, ed. Robert Bolling Woos Anne Miller: Love and Courtship in Colonial Virginia, 1760 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), pp. 5-7 and Daniel Blake Smith, Inside the Great House: Planter Family Life in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Society (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 139-140.

5. Letitia Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 11 May and 24 Aug. 1786, and Samuel Meredith to Letitia Breckinridge, 20 July 1786. See also John Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, 23 March 1786, all in Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 30-31; Alexander Brown, The Cabells and Their Kin (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1939), p. 151. Jackson T. Main includes Joseph Cabell and Patrick Henry among the 100 richest men in Virginia during the 1780s. Neither the Breckinridges nor Merediths made the list, but Main did not take into account property held in Kentucky or West Virginia when compiling his list. Main, "The One Hundred," William and Mary Quarterly (hereafter cited as WMQ), 3rd ser., 11 (1954): 353, 371, 376-377.

6. Samuel Meredith to Letitia Breckinridge, 20 July 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3.

7. Samuel Meredith, Jr. to Letitia Breckinridge, 10 Aug. 1786, ibid.

8. Letitia Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 24 Aug. 1786, ibid.

9. Will of Robert Breckinridge, 17 Aug. 1772, Botetourt Co. Will Bk. A, pp. 36-40, microfilm, Virginia State Library and Archives (hereafter cited as VSL), Richmond; Will of John Lyth and Lyth to William Preston, 3 Apr. 1777, Fleming Papers.

10. Letitia Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 14 Aug. and 5 Sept. 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3. See also Letitia Preston to Susanna Preston, 30 Nov. 1803, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection (herafter cited as Preston-Davie Papers), Filson Club, Louisville, Ky.; and Edward Johnson to William Preston, 17 Jan. 1776, Preston Family Papers (Mss 1 P9267a), Virginia Historical Society (hereafter cited as VHS), Richmond. On parental consent, see Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 142-150.

11. Letitia Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 5 Sept. 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3.

12. Jane Meredith to Letitia Breckinridge, 23 Sept. [1786], ibid., vol. 4.

13. John Smith to John Brown, 13 Nov. 1786, typescript, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS.

14. Samuel Meredith , Jr. to Letitia Breckinridge, 12 Nov. 1786 and Mary H. Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, 19 Nov. 1786, both in Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3; Elizabeth Meredith to Letitia Breckinridge, 6 Aug. 1787, ibid., vol. 4; and Mary Howard to John Brown, 15 Jan. 1787, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS. On wedding trips cf. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), p. 142.

15. Robert Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 18 Jan. 1810, Papers of James Breckinridge, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

16. Quotations from Wm. Smith to John Preston, 23 June 1784, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS and John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 25 Jan. 1788, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 4. See also Edward Johnson to Wm. Preston, 2 Dec. 1779, Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS; John Preston to John Breckinridge, 1 Mar. 1784, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1; Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 9 Sept. 1783, and Priscilla Bullitt to Anne Fleming, July 1791, both in Fleming Papers; and Nathaniel Hart to John Preston, 25 Dec. 1800, Preston-Radford Papers, Alderman Library. On the influence of kin on mate selection cf. Smith, Inside the Great House, p. 131.

17. James Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, Mar. 1794, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 10.

18. On female travel, see for example John Brown to Wm. Preston, 6 Mar. 1773, Draper, Collection 2 QQ 144. Brown's wife gave birth to a son on 27 Apr. 1773, Dorman, Prestons, p. 12.

19. Edward Johnson to Wm. Preston, 12 and 17 July 1775 and 1 June 1776. See also 31 July 1776, 3 Feb. 1778, and 29 Aug. and 28 Oct. 1779. All in Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS except 12 July 1775, which is in Preston Family Papers (Mss 1 P9267a), section 3, VHS. See also John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 17 Aug. 1788 and 10 Mar. 179[5] and John Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, [June] 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, vols. 5, 11, and 3.

20. Wm. Preston to Letitia Breckinridge, 7 Oct. 1774, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1. James McDowell to James McDowell, 21 May 1821, James McDowell Sr. Papers, Alderman Library. This view contrasts with that expressed by Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), p. 79. Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 158-159 considers pregnancies and miscarriages as illnesses that strained marriages.

21. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 11 Apr. 1772 and 20 Nov. 1781; Stephen Trigg to Anne Fleming, 20 May 1780, both in Fleming Papers. Cf. Ulrich, A Midwife's Tale, pp. 183-196 and Sally G. McMillan, Motherhood in the Old South: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infant Rearing (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), pp. 56-78.

22. Letitia Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 11 May and 10 July 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3. Elizabeth Meredith to Letitia Breckinridge, 6 Aug. 1787, ibid., vol. 4. Brown, The Cabells and Their Kin, pp. 247-248.

23. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 6 Mar. and 11 Apr. 1772 and 20 Nov. 1781, Fleming Papers; John Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, [June] 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3; Jane Meredith to Letitia Breckinridge, 6 Aug. 1787, ibid., vol. 4; Letitia Preston to Susanna Preston, 30 Nov. 1803, Preston-Davie Papers; and Susanna Preston to James McDowell, 19 Nov. 1816, James McDowell Sr. Papers. See also Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, 23 Oct. 1784, Fleming Papers. Smith, Inside the Great House, p. 30, notes similar practices among tidewater families. Cf. Norton, Liberty's Daughters, p. 78.

24. Joseph Cabell to John Breckinridge, 25 July 1788 and Elizabeth Meredith to Letitia Breckinridge, 4 July 1788, both in Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 5. See also Letitia Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 10 July 1786, ibid., vol. 3; Sarah McDowell to James McDowell, 5 Apr. 1820, McDowell Family Papers, Alderman Library; Edward Johnson to Wm. Preston, 2 Dec.

1779, Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS; and Sarah W. Warfield to Anne Fleming, 25 Apr. 1795, Fleming Papers.

25. Rosanna Wallace to Elizabeth Christian, 26 Sept. 1786, Fleming Papers and Eliza Madison to Mary R. Preston, Preston-Radford Papers, Alderman Library.

26. John Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, [June] 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3. Dorman, Prestons, pp. 22, 32, 34, and 36.

27. Information on naming patterns among the children and grandchildren of John and Elizabeth Patton Preston compiled from Dorman, Prestons, pp. 6-337.

28. Ibid. See also Priscilla Bullitt to Elizabeth Christian, 10 Dec. 1787, Fleming Papers; John Breckinridge to James Breckinridge, 24 Feb. 1804, Breckinridge-Marshall Family Papers, Filson Club; and Elizabeth Ramsey to Anne Fleming, 18 Nov. 1805, Baxter Family Papers, Washington and Lee University Library. Susanna Preston, who moved from Virginia to Kentucky after she married Nathaniel Hart, named her fifth daughter Virginia, in memory of her home state. Nathaniel Hart to John Preston, 18 Aug. 1809, Preston Family Papers-Didier Collection (hereafter cited as Preston-Didier Papers), Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (hereafter cited as VPISU), Blacksburg, and Dorman, Prestons, p. 62.

29. Francis Preston to Susanna Preston, 26 May 1811, Preston-Davie Papers.

30. Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 27 June 1811, Papers of James Breckinridge.

31. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 30 July 1782, Fleming Papers.

32. Francis Preston to James Breckinridge, 15 July 1798, Papers of James Breckinridge and Dorman, Prestons, p. 55.

33. Information tabulated from ibid., pp. 29-377.

34. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 4 Dec. 1770; Jan. 1771; 16 Jan., 11 Apr., and 12 June 1772, Fleming Papers.

35. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 30 Jan. 1775, n.d. [ca. 1775-1779], 20 Nov. 1781, and 15 Feb. 1785, ibid.

36. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, n.d. [ca. 1775-1779], ibid. Maternal nursing predominated throughout early America,

see Smith Inside the Great House, pp. 34-37 and Norton, Liberty's Daughters, p. 90.

37. [Eliza Henry Preston], Autobiography, n.d., Preston Family Papers-Gray Collection (hereafter cited as Preston-Gray Papers), Filson Club; Elizabeth Ramsey to Anne Fleming, 7 Aug. 1798, Baxter Family Papers; John Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, 21 Aug. 1786, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 3; and Nathaniel Hart to John Preston, 5 Mar. 1806, Preston-Didier Papers. Cf. Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 42-43.

38. John Brown to Wm. Preston, 23 Aug. 1773, Draper Collection, 2 QQ 149-150 (microfilm edition) State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison. See also John Brown to Wm. Preston, 28 May 1774, ibid. 3 QQ 29. Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming, 23 Sept. and 22 Dec. 1784, Fleming Papers. See Also Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming, 21 Sept 1784, ibid. Cf. Norton, Liberty's Daughters, p. 92.

39. Edward Johnson to Wm. Preston, 29 Mar. 1780 and n.d., Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS.

40. John Brown to Wm. Preston, 2 Mar. 1782, Draper Collection, 5 QQ 106 as quoted in Patricia Givens Johnson, William Preston and the Allegheny Patriots (Pulaski, Va.: B.D. Smith & Bros., Printers, Inc., 1976), p. 303; Wm. Preston to Letitia Breckinridge, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1; and Dorman, Prestons, p. 22.

41. John Brown to Wm. Preston, 25 Nov. 1771 and 18 Mar. 1772, Draper Collection, 2 QQ 129 and 133-134.

42. John Floyd to James McDowell, 28 Aug. 1808, James McDowell Sr. Papers. The prominent role of religion in the Fleming, Brown, and Preston families contrasts with the position accorded religious values in tidewater planter families by Smith in Inside the Great House, p. 41.

43. Mary Trigg to Anne Fleming, 20 Mar. 1780, Fleming Papers. See also Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 1787 and Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, 25 June 1789, both in ibid.

44. Edward Johnson to William Preston, 31 July 1776, Preston Family Papers, box 4, VHS.

45. Anne Baxter to Anne Fleming, n.d., Fleming Papers.

46. Anne Fleming to Anne Baxter, n.d. and Anne Fleming to John Fleming, 8 Sept. 1803, ibid. See also Anne Fleming to Anne Baxter, 11 Aug. 1805; Anne Baxter to John Fleming, 29 Dec. n.y.; and Anne Baxter to Anne Fleming, 2 Aug. n.y., in ibid. For

another example, see Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, [ca. 1780-1781], ibid.

47. Anne Fleming to Anne Baxter, 11 Aug. 1805, ibid. See also Anne Baxter to Anne Fleming, 15 Aug. 1806 and 2 Aug. n.y. and Anne Fleming to Anne Baxter, 23 Sept. 1805, 25 Sept. 1807, May 1809, and n.d., all in ibid.

48. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 21 Jan. and [?] Jan. 1771, 12 June 1772, and 3 Oct. 1774, and Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming, 7 Sept. 1774, all in ibid.

49. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 29 Nov. 1781, 6 Aug. and 9 Sept. 1783, and 17 Jan. and 15 Feb. 1785, in ibid.

50. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 21 Jan. and [?] Jan. 1771, ibid. See also Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 29 Apr. 1784, ibid.

51. John Brown to Wm. Preston, 18 Feb. 1774, Draper Collection, 3 QQ 8; Anne Baxter to Anne Fleming, 29 Dec. n.y., 11 Aug. and 23 Sept. 1805, and n.d., all in Fleming Papers; and Anne Fleming to John Fleming, 8 Sept. 1803, in ibid. Anne's elder son William also lived with his sister to attend school in the 1790s, see George Baxter to Anne Fleming, 20 June 179[8], ibid. John Preston to [Francis Preston], 2 Mar. 1815, Preston-Gray Papers.

52. Wm. Preston to Letitia Breckinridge, 13 Oct. 1777, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 1.

53. John Preston to Wm. Radford Preston, 16 May 1811, Preston Family Papers, VPISU. See also John Preston to Susanna Preston, 23 May 1810, Preston-Davie Papers and Susan McDowell to John Preston, 14 May 1811, Preston-Didier Papers.

54. John Preston to Wm. Radford Preston, 16 May 1811, Preston Family Papers, VPISU.

55. Wm. Radford Preston to John Preston, 16 Jan. 1812, Preston Family Papers, VPISU. See also Lysander Smith, Wm. Radford Preston, and John B. Preston to John Preston, 1-2 Oct. 1812, Preston-Didier Papers.

56. John Preston to Wm. Radford Preston, 16 May 1811, Preston Family Papers, VPISU.

57. John Preston to Wm. Radford Preston, 16 May 1811, Preston Family Papers, VPISU and John Preston to Susanna Preston, 23 May 1810, Preston-Davie Papers.

58. [Eliza Henry Preston], Autobiography, n.d., Preston-Gray Papers. It seems unlikely that Eliza or her brother studied all these languages with their tutor.

59. Ibid. Eliza's cousins, the daughters of Sarah and James McDowell also attended the Ann Smith Academy. See Sarah McDowell to Eliza Madison, 17 Mar. 1808, Preston-Davie Papers.

60. John Preston to Susanna Preston, 23 May 1810, ibid.

61. [Eliza Henry Preston], Autobiography, n.d., Preston-Gray Papers.

62. Conrad Speece to Polly Hanna, 9 Jan. 1791, Washington and Lee University Library.

63. Ibid.

CHAPTER V

"WE ARE IN A STATE OF MIGRATION"[1]: KENTUCKY

Ties of kinship remained important in the lives of both men and women in the Virginia backcountry. Extended kin provided a source of emotional support, a means of promoting economic security and political success, and a network of reliable adults to share the responsibilities of childrearing. Between 1782 and 1797, the Preston and Christian extended kin groups stretched across the Appalachian mountains. In that decade and a half no fewer than eighteen families from the two groups migrated to Kentucky.[2] In many cases the decision to move was a gradual one, made after several crossings and recrossings of the Appalachians. Those who made the move often expressed a longing to see those left behind and encouraged other family members to join them. Many did. In this way the kinship networks characteristic of the backcountry elite in western Virginia were recreated in Kentucky. At the same time Virginia and Kentucky branches of the two extended kin networks maintained contact with each other. Visits and letters kept family members from the two regions in touch,

and family news, a shared religious faith, business interests, and a concern for each others' children bound them together.

The young men of the Preston and Christian extended kin groups usually initiated moves to Kentucky, although their wives exerted varying degrees of influence on whether and when the move would actually take place. Aging parents sometimes followed their adult children. Economic opportunities proved an important consideration in deciding whether or not to move, but family ties also exerted a strong influence. The two concerns were rarely separate and distinct. After migrating, men moved back and forth between Kentucky and Virginia more easily and more frequently than women, especially married women encumbered with young children. The comparative lack of mobility for these women may have given rise to the more frequent expressions of longing for trans-Appalachian kin that characterized their letters.

"Upon the Threshold of an Empire"[3]: The Decision to Move

The interest of men like William Preston and William Christian in Kentucky dated from at least the early 1770s. Land speculation, not a desire to emigrate, initially fuelled this interest, although by the late 1770s some elite men looked to Kentucky as a reservoir of land for their

children.[4] The actual decision to move there, however, was often made gradually, sometimes over a period of years.

In 1774 William Preston, then surveyor of Fincastle County, sent his deputy John Floyd to Kentucky to begin surveying land for soldiers who held land warrants as payment for their services in the Seven Years' War.[5] After a stint as a privateer early in the Revolutionary war, Floyd returned to Virginia, but he soon decided to settle in Kentucky. In 1779, his wife, Jane Buchanan--a granddaughter of James Patton--and Floyd's three brothers and two brothers-in-law accompanied him to Beargrass Creek, near the site of present-day Louisville. Preston's brother-in-law John Howard and a Rockbridge County neighbor, Samuel McDowell, soon joined Floyd and his kin at Floyd's Station. Shortly thereafter, Floyd invited Preston's nephew, John Brown, son of the Reverend John Brown, to Kentucky. By 1783, the year of William Preston's death, Robert and Alexander Breckinridge, stepsons of Preston's sister Lettice Breckinridge, and her own son, William, had also arrived at Floyd's Station. In that same year John Floyd was klled by Indians, his pregnant widow remained in Kentucky with the couple's children and his kin.[6]

The Breckinridge brothers worked principally as surveyors in Kentucky during the mid-1780s. Their letters to each other and to their mother reveal something of the scope of their activities and provide insight into the

process by which various family members decided to move. Alexander (Alex), Robert, and William (Billy) spent the winter of 1783-84 in a cabin within the fort at Floyd's Station. Alexander held the appointment as Surveyor for Jefferson County, and Robert and Billy served as his assistants. The brothers actually did little surveying that winter "on a [sic] Account of the Severity of the weather," but they still managed to locate warrants for themselves and others. Billy certainly speculated in treasury and military warrants, and the others may have as well. In the Fall of 1784, James (Jimmy or Jamey) Breckinridge, who had just completed a surveying expedition to the Guyandotte region (in present-day West Virginia), joined his brothers in Kentucky.[7]

The discussion of whether various family members ultimately would settle in Kentucky began almost as soon as the brothers arrived. In February 1784, Billy wrote to his mother that he had "for sometime had a thought of selling out entirely in this Country [Kentucky] as I could do to very good advantage but will not finally determine upon untill I have your advise [sic] upon the subject." As Billy's letter implies, keeping the family together was a consideration in determining who would live where. One month later Alex confided to his half-brother John in Virginia that if he could provide a residence "that would contain us all," he would do so, "let it be in what part of

the Globe was most agreeable, I care not where it is, so we could all be together."[8]

The question of whether Lettice Breckinridge would live in Virginia or Kentucky proved a central concern for the family in the mid-1780s. In September 1784, Billy wrote to John about renting cleared land in Kentucky for their mother. The next month he wrote to Lettice herself that "Jimmy tells me you appear to be very anxious about coming to this Country next year particularly I find if Jonney should come out." He mentioned that Mrs. Floyd would rent her a place "in preference to any person living." Later in October Billy reversed his position and encouraged his mother to remain in Botetourt County where she was surrounded by friends "for some time to come" instead of being in Kentucky with "disagreeable Neighbors which you might have for some time" and "the inconvenience of living in bad houses." Possibly his brothers prevailed on William to curtail his enthusiam for having their aging mother emigrate. At the same time that William wrote to Lettice discouraging the move, Alexander wrote to John that he would not "advise my Mother to move from where she is as she is tolerably well fixed and is now growing old and feeble." Yet even Alexander maintained that the decision was Lettice's alone to make and agreed to help her rent good land should she decide to come.[9]

Meanwhile, Alexander himself had not decided whether to

stay in Kentucky. When John inquired, he answered that "that matter is still undetermined with me as yet, tho extreamly fond of the Country and have some fine land, yet there are other materials wanting such as a wife & Negroes &c &c. these articles are necessary toward housekeeping & I have none of them [and] must get some one [who] has them or wait and Struggle on till I can make them myself, then Sir I shall be able to inform you where I shall settle myself." Alexander soon acquired the "materials wanting." In December 1784, Alexander married Floyd's widow. He remained in Kentucky, while his brothers continued to traverse the Appalachians and to wrestle with the decision of whether or not to leave Virginia.[10]

Between 1784 to 1788, James Breckinridge made at least two trips to Kentucky. After his journey out in 1784, he returned to Virginia, but by the Spring of 1786, he was back in Kentucky. From there he wrote to John that since coming to Kentucky he had "formed so great an attachment for the place that I have declined all thought of disposing of my land." He prepared to purchase an additional 4,000 acres to make a seat. Later in 1786, James returned to Virginia to study law at the College of William and Mary. While he was there, his cousins James and John Brown encouraged him to emigrate. In 1786 and 1787, John Brown oversaw some of his cousin's land interests in Kentucky and kept him informed concerning political developments there. In 1788, John

Brown's brother James, who had attended William and Mary with his cousin, moved to Kentucky. Once there, James Brown lamented the separation from his Williamsburg friends. "Good God! What would I give to spend one Week at Williamsburg to convers one hour with any of the best of friends[--]Nelson, Carter, Carr, Clark, &c. It is a pleasure which Alas I shall never enjoy--My heart aches my Dr. friend whenever I think of you all." James Brown informed his cousin that the practice of law in Kentucky was not as lucrative as it had been earlier. "The Harvest of Business is over and Nothing but a few Gleanings left." Still, the Browns encouraged James Breckinridge to emigrate, even while responding forthrightly to his inquiries concerning opportunities for lawyers.[11]

In August 1788, James Breckinridge learned that his brother John was also considering moving to Kentucky. "I can't but be agreeably astonished at your late determination to become a resident of the Kentucky country. . . . That being the country in which I at present design burying my bones, makes me the more anxious that you and some more of the family should move out. your going will no doubt be a means of taking others; I hope so at best." James excitedly began making plans for his brother. "I think you had better . . . defer moveing out for two or three years untill the country becomes better settled and less harassed by Indians; the settlements on the other side of the ohio will soon

become pretty formidable & will be able to repell the attacks of the Indians . . . I am anxious that you should make your purchase [of land] about beargrass; the Quality of the land is unexceptionable . . . there is one tract which if you could possibly purchase I am certain will please you . . . Alexander Breckinridge can show it to you for it adjoins his tract."[12]

In August 1788, James Breckinridge clearly intended to move to Kentucky, but the information he received from his cousin John Brown in September may have been instrumental in changing his mind. Brown wrote that "You wish to know how I like this Country? When I consider it as unconnected with my Interest as a professionalist, I admire it-- I look upon it as a [land? fa]voured by nature-- as a second Paradise. But when I consider it as the Country in which I am to support myself by the practice of Law, I execrate, I abhor, I detest it. Why my friend would you believe it? There are not less than twenty attornies in the [Kentucky] District at present! By Heavens they must hunt Buffalo, or starve. I have, 'tis true, a much larger portion of business than any other Attorney who began at the same time; but the half of the business carried on in any [of the?] counties in the District would not be worth the attent[ion of] any man who could find any other probable means of securing an Independence." Even after Brown's discouraging report on the prospects for lawyers, James Breckinridge initially

stood by his decision to emigrate, although he intended to delay the move for eighteen months. Upon learning of the delay John Brown lamented, "Pray what will you be about in the mean time? If you do not come sooner than that time you propose I fear there will scarcely be room to receive you especially if the migration of Attys continues till then as great as for the year past." By April 1790, however, James Breckinridge still had not arrived in Kentucky, prompting his cousin James Brown to inquire, "Pray have you declined all further thoughts of residing in Kentucky? I had hoped before this time to have seen you here and to have had you as a Neighbour."[13]

James Breckinridge never emigrated to Kentucky. He settled in Botetourt County, not far from where he had been born, and lived there for the rest of his life.[14] Robert Breckinridge, like his brother Alexander, apparently never resided permanently in Virginia after the mid-1780s. In 1793, John Breckinridge and his family followed his mother Lettice, his younger brother Preston, and his sister Betsy and her husband Samuel Meredith to Kentucky. Billy Breckinridge returned to Virginia after making a bad business deal in 1786. He lived in Botetourt County for more than a decade before migrating to Kentucky.

To the "Land of Milk and Honey"[15]: The Process of Migration

Five years elapsed between the time when John Breckinridge informed his brother of his desire to emigrate and the beginning of his move. John's wife Polly apparently resisted the move for as long as possible and persuaded him to delay.[16] Preparations for the trek finally began in 1792, but nearly a full year passed before all members of this Breckinridge household reached Kentucky.

In February 1792, John engaged George Thompson, a fellow emigre, to transport approximately twenty of his slaves to Kentucky. Thompson advised Breckinridge to have the slaves ready by the end of March and to remember to include linen for a tent. He also suggested that Breckinridge arm his slaves with at least one shotgun. On April 3, Thompson's household and Breckinridge's slaves left Fluvanna County for Kentucky. They travelled over land to Redstone (present-day Brownsville, Pennsylvania) and then floated down the Monongehela and Ohio rivers into Kentucky. According to Thompson, they "had snow or rain every day except two. the high waters great Rains & snow were enough to Make us lose our patience[,] our Negroes Every day [were] out of heart and sick . . . When the Negroes were we & almost ready to give out then I came forward with my good friend whiskey & Once in Every hour unless they were a sleep I was Oblige[d] to give them Whiskey. My Dear Friend wet or dry I kept my Spirits up & therefore went on. Your horses did very well till we got to the Allegany Mountain & then

they faild & by the time we got to One Jesse Tombinsons I was oblige[d] to leave your Cart. . . . on the 17th May I Delivered Your 18 Negroes to Col. Wm. Russell all well fat & hearty & every one much pleased with this country. Also delivered yr two horses & every thing you sent except the cart."[17]

On May 17, William Russell, a former neighbor in southwest Virginia, notified Breckinridge's brother-in-law Samuel Meredith that the slaves had arrived. "Colo. Russell Hand[e]d me yr Letter last evening & informd me of the arrival of yr Negroes, which afford[e]d me a great deal of pleasure as it informs it will not be long before we may expect to see you with your white family." Before Russell and Meredith commenced hiring out the slaves according to Breckinridge's instructions, Meredith "endeaver[ed] to have them settled to their mind & imagine[d] there will be no doubt of their remaining content." This was accomplished by sending them from Russell's to Meredith's on a visit. On May 19, Russell wrote to Breckinridge that "I have informed them [Breckinridge's slaves] how I shall dispose of them [by hiring them out] to which they seem resigned." Both Russell and Meredith assured Breckinridge that his slaves were "in good spirits."[18]

At the end of August Russell informed Breckinridge that he had succeeded in hiring out his slaves "at different places in this Neighbourhood [Fayette County], and are all

at this time well pleased. I was pestered a little to find a place for old Gnatty and Tomsey, tho they seem well satisfied at this time. Jack remains with me." Young women and their children were kept together and hired at a slightly lower rate than "young women without encumbrances." Russell's bargaining including clothing and shoes for each slave at the end of the rental term, as well as a monthly rental fee.[19]

At about the same time that John arranged to move his slaves to Kentucky, his mother Lettice Breckinridge made up her mind to emigrate. The two moves were not unrelated. In February 1792, James Breckinridge wrote to his brother John that their youngest brother Preston had "retd from Kentucky without making any preparation for settling there, He seems undetermined in his views, with respect to fixing on some place for his future residence; I think it is probably [sic] he may continue for some time where he is. My Mother's removal to Kentucky will depend wholly on yourself. The poor old lady is incessantly entreating me to go along and I don't doubt was my own consent all that was necessary, but that she would easily prevail on me. She (as well as myself) is very anxious to know when you mean to set out or whether you have in any respect altered your views concerning the journey."[20]

Lettice and James soon had their answer. In March John wrote to his mother that he intended to send about twenty of

his slaves out "one year before me" because "I am somewhat afraid of the Kentucky politicians with respect to negroes and moreover without that fear, I shall find it very convenient to have them there." A concern that with the creation of a separate state government Kentucky would limit the expansion of slavery probably influenced John's decision to send his slaves over the mountains in advance of his family. Lettice and James clearly perceived their departure as evidence of John's irrevocable commitment to migration. By August she had signed over the Botetourt County farm to Preston in exchange for a life right in 300 acres on Elkhorn Creek in Fayette County. Although more than sixty years old, Lettice intended to establish her own farm in Kentucky.[21]

In early September Lettice sold "such things as she . . . [could not] take with her" and by the middle of the month was on her way to the forks of the Great Kanawha with "Capt. Boryer's Troop of Horse who . . . set out for the Western Country about the same time." In mid-September Lettice, never an optimist, wrote to her son John while en route; she enclosed a new version of her will, written in her own unmistakeable hand. From Lettice's perspective, the journey and the preparation for it had been disastrous. "I am this far on my way to Kentucky. God only knows whether I shall evere be able to Mack out the Jurney for I have had a very Disagreeable Time since I sawe you fixing for the Journey

and think that we came very poorly fixed . . . for Preston . . . will not mind his business and I have [sic] very much offred [afraid] that Anutony [sic] and Pettis [two of her slaves] will [not?] Mack out well for neither of them understand surveying and waggoni[n]g. Jack has Left us in a very bad time I hope you will try to bring hime out in the Spring for I am determend not to sell him."[22]

Her troubles with Preston, given to loafing in the years before he became a Baptist, her doubts about the skills of Anthony and Pettis, and her annoyance at Jack's disappearance all contributed to Lettice's fears about what lay ahead. Never one to confine her anxieties, however, Lettice also worried about what she was leaving behind-- her accounts and her kin. "I have got nothing Don with my aconts and has Left them [in] the hands of your Brother James," she wrote to John. "I beg you wil Try and settle in the Best mannere you can. . . . I have inclosed my will to [sic] you to keep and I Depend uppon your goodness that you will take care of Your Poor Brother Billy . . . . I hop in the Lord I will see you and your Dr. Family in the spring in kentucky. . . . remember me to me [sic] dear Polly and tell her I will doe every thing in my Power to mak her happy if she Comes to Kentucky give my love [to] my Dr. Children. . . How very much I regreted to leave Jamey and his famely behind and my other rel[at]ions. but I hope Jamy will move to Kentucky in the cors of two or 3 yeares."[23]

Lettice's daughter and son-in-law, Betsy and Samuel Meredith, welcomed her upon her safe arrival at Limestone in late October and sent two slaves and four horses to escort her to their house. Although she lived principally with her daughter, Lettice established her own farm on Elkhorn Creek in 1792. In 1793, her son Billy wrote from Virginia. "I received your letter a few days ago which came by the hands of Cousin John Preston by which you informed me that you are much pleased with Kentucky and that you have raised a good Crop of every kind which was nothing more than I expected of you." Unfortunately, Lettice also suffered some severe setbacks during her first year in Kentucky. She lost three young slaves in an epidemic, and later fell ill herself. In the Spring of 1794, Billy noted, "I was glad to hear that you had hired out your Negroes for the present year: I think it will be better than to be plagued with them youself."[24]

John Breckinridge and his "white family" joined his mother and siblings in Kentucky in April 1793. They followed Lettice's route through Redstone, and upon their arrival initially stayed with the Meredithes before moving into rented lodgings in Lexington. Like his mother, John immediately began "settling my negroes &c." on his plantation.[25]

The presence of William Christian and his kin in

Kentucky dated from almost as early as that of Preston's extended family and associates. In 1779, Christian's brother-in-law, William Fleming, headed a commission sent to Kentucky to settle disputed land claims. While on the western side of the mountains, Fleming took the opportunity to check on Christian's salt works. He wrote to his wife Anne, "I have been at your Brothers Salt Lick which is a verry Valuable estate. Salt is now made there to supply the country that article sells at 250 Dollars Pr. Bussl." Fleming also noted that "Crowds have turn'd off to Cumberland River and great numbers are prepairing [sic] to go to the Iron Banks about 15 miles below the mouth of the Ohio." Fleming's brother-in-law, Stephen Trigg, was in Kentucky with him in 1779, and already had purchased land there in anticipation of relocating his family.[26]

By 1782, the Triggs were settled at Viney Grove in Lincoln County, Kentucky. William Christian visited them there in 1783. After his return, his wife wrote to her sister-in-law, Anne Fleming. "Your Brother seems to think Kentuckey a rich body of Land & one acre of corn there is worth two here & every thing else grow[s] in Proportion[,] that water is exceeding scarce but he thinks it is a good Country to dig wells in."[27]

Upon first moving to Kentucky Mary Christian Trigg shared her brother's enthusiasm for the country. In 1782, she told her sister Anne Fleming that "I don't doubt but you

are often hearing of the beuty [sic] and goodness of this Country, and it would be need less of me to repeat it; as to my own family we are full well and hearty: and want nothing but the presence of our good friends to make us as perfectly happy as it is possible for mortals to be in this life . . . we have our children at school and in [a] fine way of learning[,] we have a fine crop growing and beautifull stock of Mares and cows so fat and pretty it would do you good to look at them."[28]

After her husband was killed by Indians later that year, Mary's opinion of Kentucky soured. She lamented his death to Anne in January 1783. "Oh my dear Sister I sincerely wish you may never experience the unhappy scene that I am plunged into; to be deprived of my Dearest earthly comfort in the loss [of] my best and only friend in a wilderness of a country far distant from every relation I have on earth with four orphan Children an big with a fifth; to tak [sic] a cursory view of it is more than human nature is able to bear; but the lord is sufficiently able to relieve them that puts their trust in him and I hope will bear me up with fortitude through all the Distress and trials of this loss till I meet again with my dear departed Husband in the regions of bliss; where that we may all meet after our voyage through this thorny world."[29]

Mary Trigg took spiritual comfort from her religion immediately after Stephen's death, but she was not long in

finding earthly companionship as well. By September 1783, she had married Bob Daniel, another Virginian emigre. Daniel probably passed through the Christian household on his way west; at that time William may have engaged him to oversee his salt works in Kentucky. In any event, Daniel's social status stood well below that of Mary Christian Trigg, and the marriage deeply distressed her brother William and his wife Anne. Remnants of the rift between them remained three years later, when Rosanna Wallace, Mary's youngest sister, observed that although the Trigg children and the Christian's eldest daughter both lived in Beargrass, "they ant good friends [and] the[y] never visit."[30]

When government business again took William Fleming to Kentucky in 1784, Rosanna and her husband Caleb Wallace had replaced the Triggs as the occupants of Viney Grove. Mary and Bob Daniel had moved to Saltsburg, where he oversaw the salt works. Fleming wryly noted to his wife Anne, "I have been at Saltsburg a day or two I have taken notice of Our New Friend from the who I do not omen much good but hope for the best." In 1785, Daniel rented out the salt works and moved his family to Beargrass.[31]

In May 1785, William Christian's family followed the Triggs and the Wallaces to Kentucky. Unlike the Breckinridges, the Christians and their kin all took the wilderness road through Cumberland gap to Kentucky. William's aging and widowed mother, Elizabeth, accompanied

the family as far as the Holston River. Anne Christian wrote to her sister-in-law Anne Fleming shortly after their arrival. "We are now got below the great Island a few miles to a place of Colo. Bledsoes & thank the Lord we are all pretty well, your Mother held out traviling as well as coud be expected, only a day or two past she complaind at times, but now seems better, She bids me tell you that if she dont find her self hearty at the time of our setting off on our journey She will go back again to Botetourt." She described the party's accommodations as "a safe place I hope," and noted that they had "plenty of provisions, fish are here in great abundance. We live about 20 steps from the North fork of Holston in sight of Rhodes Iron works & also in sight of an ordinary across the River." Finally, she advised Anne Fleming of the family's travel plans for the next leg of the journey. "Sam Ervin will go on with the Negroes with the first company passing out, but I expect we shall stay here this Summer, in hopes of large numbers coming along out in the Fall."[32]

Elizabeth Christian did not "find her self hearty" when her son's family set off for Kentucky; she returned to Botetourt County to live with the Flemings. William's family settled on Beargrass Creek in Kentucky. Within a year of the arrival of Anne and the children, William was killed. After his death, the family stayed briefly with the Wallaces at Viney Grove. While they were there, Rosanna

Wallace confided to her sister Anne Fleming, "I have had some thing working on me since the death of our dear Brother. Like [no other?] the People here call it. it is a Riseing in my Stomack that is very severe always when alone to Reflect on the few of our family that is left and the little prospect I have of ever seeing my dear mammy again in this world."[33]

Among elite families the decision to emigrate was a calculated one. Economic considerations held a central place in the decision-making process, but family ties also exerted strong influence on both men and women. Although slaves had little or no say in the decision to migrate, family considerations influenced their willingness to cooperate in making the move. When Jack ran away, Lettice Breckinridge had little doubt about where he had gone-- back to Virginia. The pleasure displayed by John Breckinridge's slaves when permitted to visit the Merediths' plantation suggests that at least some of them had kin there.

The presence of some family members in Kentucky tugged others in that direction, but the conditions that individuals encountered on the frontier could cause rifts among families. Mary Trigg's remarriage illustrated one potentially devisive aspect of the frontier, social levelling. Both Bob Daniel and Alexander Breckinridge "married up," although the leap for Daniel certainly was

greater than for Breckinridge. Billy Breckinridge's caution to his mother to delay coming for a few years to avoid "disagreeable neighbours" gives credence at least to elite fears of social levelling.

Unlike her sister-in-law Mary Trigg, when Anne Christian's husband died in Kentucky, she was able to take refuge with kin. Rosanna Wallace (Rosie) had spent time in her brother's household as a young woman; she knew her sister-in-law and her children well. The Wallace's hospitality at Viney Grove provided Anne Christian with more than a five-week respite from the day-to-day concerns of running a household and a farm. When Stephen Trigg died four years earlier, Mary found herself "in a wilderness of a country far distant from every relation I have on earth."

"Dear Grandmama, Uncle, and Aunt"[34]: Kinship and Migration

Through a pattern of serial migration families began to recreate on the western side of the Appalachians kinship networks similar to those left behind in Virginia. At the same time, to the extent that they could, they maintained ties with families in the East through letters and visits. These bonds remained strong; immigrants longed to see those left behind and continued to encourage them to move west.[35]

Rosanna Wallace's letter not only expressed her fear of never seeing her mother again, it also unwittingly revealed

the extent to which the Christian extended family network had already begun to reestablish itself in Kentucky as early as 1786. She noted that "Billy Trigg [Mary's son] was up the other day, he says his mammy talks of comeing up in a few weeks to see us." Anne Christian and all her children except daughters Prissey and Betsy remained with the Wallaces at Viney Grove, "snug in a new cabbin." Prissey, who had married Alexander S. Bullitt shortly after her family's arrival in Kentucky, resided on Beargrass Creek; she and her husband stayed behind there after William Christian's death. Her sister Betsy was visiting the couple because Prissey had just given birth and lay ill "with no life expected for her."[36]

By 1787, Anne Christian had reestablished a household at Cold Spring separate from the Wallaces; fear of Indians prevented her from returning to the Beargrass region in Jefferson County. As Prissey Bullitt explained to her grandmother "My Mother is as yet living up in Lincoln [county] you know she was always very timmorous and is much more so since the lamented death of my ever dear Father, she cannot thin[k] of living on the Frontiers[,] the savages are extremely troublesome at present in this part of the Country[.] they killed a man the other day within a mile of us."[37]

Mary Trigg Daniel's daughter Betsy stayed with her aunt and her cousins at Cold Spring, where Anne had retained the

same tutor who taught her children in Virginia. Although she noted in a letter to her mother-in-law that "we have very few acquaintances here," Anne included among her friends the Mosbys, who had come to Kentucky in the same party as the Christians, and the Rices, who shared similar religious sensibilities.[38]

While the Christians rebuilt a network of kin and friends in Kentucky, they did not neglect family members in Virginia. Anne maintained an active correspondence with her mother-in-law, Elizabeth Christian. Mutual affection, shared religious values, and their emeshed economic affairs bound the two women together. William Christian had served as his father's executor, and by the time of his own death the two estates had become almost inseparably intertwined. William's son-in-law, Alexander Bullitt, became his executor, but Bullitt's own ineptitude and the distance separating Kentucky and Virginia hampered his effectiveness. In October 1787, Anne complained to Elizabeth that it "still gives me pain to think of your never having recd any support or maintainance from the ample provisions . . . I will use my best endeavours to get you something considerable as quick as possible." She also prepared to send slaves Kate, Bill, Isaac, and Danson back across the mountains to Virginia. They had emigrated with William's family, even though under the terms of Israel's will they belonged to Elizabeth. Matters with Bullitt apparently reached a crisis

during this period. Anne's daughter fifteen-year-old Sarah Winston (Sally) Christian wrote to her grandmother from her sister Prissey's house to "prevail on Uncle or Aunt Fleming to send me Power Letters [power of attorney] [and] I shall be ever oblig'd & would soon return them."[39]

At the end of the summer in 1788, Anne Christian and all her children except Prissey set out for an extended visit to Virginia. Anne made no attempt to liquidate the family's economic assets in Kentucky, and her sister-in-law Rosanna Wallace clearly expected her to return. On September 20, she wrote to Elizabeth, "I am safely arrived at Mr. Madisons [a brother-in-law in southwest Virginia] with my children all well . . . we all stood the journey exceedingly well & had fine weather . . . I left sister Wallace & her children all well . She was over to see [us] and stayd more then a fortnight, as to my appointing a time now to come to col. Flemings it is out of my power, but I am so anxious to see you & all the dear family, that as soon as We get rested & the Horses recruited I shall keep on my journey."[40]

Anne Christian never returned to Kentucky. In the summer of 1790, she died at Belmont, the Flemings' farm in Botetourt County. Alexander Bullitt immediately asked William Fleming about the fate of the Christian children, still at Belmont, and their property, mostly in Kentucky. "I am unfeignedly sorry for Mrs. Christians Death [and] the

Loss her Children have sustained from their Property and the Difficulties of the Wilderness to encounter before they can get to it[.] could I be certain that they were willing to Come out and Live with their Sister I should not Hesitate a Moment . . . [to] come in & bring them out but untill I am Certain that my Ride would not be for nothing It would not be worth my while to under take[.] it is to you Sir then I must Apply for information upon the Subject. Perhaps if they are not all willing [to come] some of them may [be]."[41]

The Flemings' old friend Harry Innes, who had remarried and moved to Danville, Kentucky, also wrote to William after Anne Christian's death, apparently in response to a request that he undertake administration of the estate for her children. Innes explained that "My regard for the memory of the amiable Mrs. Christian would induce me to undertake any thing which could tend to the benefit of her family, but I think the business of the Estate is in such a channel, that it cannot be diverted, without creating for me displeasure. Mr. Wallace is the surviving Guardian of the daughters of Colo. Christian & I suppose will give them every aid which is in his power. Colo. Bullitt as exor. of Colo. Christian will have a right to possess himself of the salt works . . . & if he pays proper attention to this business & promotes the Interest of the Estate, I think him the most proper person to have the direction of the estate." Innes tried

to reassure Fleming of Bullitt's reliability. "Colo. Bullitt is greatly reformed. I have now hopes of his being an useful member of Society." But he also extended an invitation to the Christian daughters to travel to Kentucky with his wife and "to make a tender of my house for their use at any time & as long as they shall find it convenient to stay, & that I will consider them as of my own family."[42]

Sally, Betsy, Annie, and Dolly Christian chose to remain in Virginia with their aunt and uncle, Anne and William Fleming. Meanwhile, the Christian kinship network in Kentucky expanded. In 1787, Leonard Fleming married his cousin Polly (sometimes called Molly) Bowyer, and by the Fall of 1789, they were living with the Wallaces in Kentucky. Several of the Trigg children had returned to Virginia in 1787, and in February 1791, Betsy Trigg married Preston Breckinridge. Two months later Rosanna Wallace expressed her joy that "Preston Breckinridge Intends moveing to this Country [Kentucky]."[43]

Leonard Fleming and Alexander Bullitt both visited Virginia in 1791, but young children and poor health, respectively, prevented their aunt Rosanna Wallace and Alexander's wife Prissey from travelling. Both continued to miss their Virginia kin. In 1787, Prissey wrote to her grandmother, "I heard some time since that you still had thoughts of coming to this country[.] nothing would give me

more pleasure could I ever have it in my power to entertain you . . . I cannot hear whether Uncle Fleming has dropped all thoughts of removing to this Country or not." Rosanna Wallace also longed to see Elizabeth Christian. Shortly after the death of one of her children, she told her sister Anne that "I am very unhappy to hear of my dear mammys declining state of health for ever since Sister Christian went In I have been Pleasing my self with the thoughts of Mammy's comeing out with here as she told me If she [Elizabeth] woud come she [Anne Christian] woud come by water on her account. but I am afraid my Happyness of ever seeing her In this world Is over[.] I shoud think of going In some time But coud not think of leaving my Children one for[t]night since my great affliction may It Please the lord to spare the Rest while I live."[44]

Prissey Bullitt's isolated location in the Beargrass region probably contributed to her lonesomenss for her kin. After her cousin Leonard Fleming visited the Bullitts in the summer of 1791, she told her aunt, Anne Fleming, that "he [Leonard] is in doubt whether to sell his Land down here [Beargrass] or move to it; but I believe he will sell it if possible and purchase above which I am sorry for, as I should be extremely glad to have some of my relations near enough to visit."[45]

Prissey corresponded with her aunt and sisters as regularly as the mails allowed although "letters very often

get lost on the way." She expressed particular concern over the marriage prospects of her sisters. Had Sally married Dr. Walter Warfield in the Spring of 1791? In a letter that Leonard carried to his mother in 1792, Prissey indicated her relief that Betsy had decided to delay "marrying untill she comes to Kentucky, as I have been uneasy for for [sic] fear she would marry Tom Lewis. Mrs. Howards [Lettice Breckinridge's sister] Family told Capt. Terrell they were informed in Letters from Botetourt that she was to be married to Tom Lewis but pray My dear ant use all your influence to prevent so imprudent a match as that would be." Prissey probably recalled times in her childhood spent in Anne Fleming's house when she declared "I formerly had some hopes of Uncles moving to Kentucky but now allmost despair of ever seeing you in this part of the world."[46]

During the mid-1790s the Christian family extended kin network in Kentucky continued to expand. In January 1793, Leonard and Polly Fleming left the Wallaces and "removed to the place which he purchased of [his cousin] Billy Trigg." In 1794, Sally Christian and her husband Walter Warfield joined the Bullitts on Beargrass. Betsy, Annie, and Dolly Christian, younger sisters of Sally and Prissey, returned to Kentucky. After the Warfields moved to their own residence, Betsy and Annie lived with them, while Dolly resided with the Bullitts. By 1795, William and Anne Fleming's daughter Betsy and her husband Cary Allen had arrived in Kentucky.[47]

A few months after the Warfields settled in Kentucky, Sally informed Anne Fleming that she had "seen Cousin Lenny two or three times since we came out . . . [and] The girls [her sisters] and Doctor Warfield go in a few weeks to Visit Aunt Wallace & intend to go see all their relations in that part of the World [Lincoln County]." In 1795, she noted that her husband hoped to pursuade Cary Allen, who was ill, and his wife Betsy to "try a journey down here--& see what advantage it will be of to him." Still, Sally complained, "We have little or no society on Beargrass." Her sister Betsy confirmed Sally's assessment of life on Beargrass. "Indeed we very seldom hear from our connections in Virginia, as we live in rather a retired place, where we very rarely see anyone from that state and the distance render[s] the conveyance of letters very uncertain."[48]

Four years later from her more central location in Lincoln County, Rosanna Wallace conveyed a different impression of Kentucky from that of her nieces on Beargrass --one of a woman firmly situated within a web of kinship. In April 1799, she wrote to her sister Anne Fleming, "I embrace this opportunity By Cousin Stephen [Trigg, her nephew] of writeing you . . . . I cam[e] from Preston Breckinridges yesterday[,] Betsy [her niece] has a young son, a very fine child. sally warfield [her niece] Is In a bad State of health; Stephen will be at Lenny's [her nephew] after he leaves this [place] so that you will hear

from them . . . Dolly Christian and Polly Trigg [her nieces] Is here[.] them and Prissey [her daughter] gives there [sic] love to there cousens." Although surrounded by nieces, nephews, and her own children, Rosanna Wallace still missed her sister. "I am almost tempted to undertake the Journey to go see you this summer; though I still have some hopes that you will pay us a viset [sic]."[49]

By the time John Breckinridge reached Kentucky in 1793, a host of relatives had preceded him. In addition to his mother, Lettice, and his brothers and sisters and their families, John found his aunts and uncles, Mary and John Howard and Anne and Francis Smith, and assorted adult cousins. In 1794, John's uncle the Reverend John Brown, who remained in Virginia, wrote to his sister-in-law Lettice Breckinridge. "I often think of you & pity your sister [Brown's wife Margaret] that has no sisters whom she can have a visite from or conversation with, In that respect you are happily fixed, you can meet together, I understand, very conveniently. I do not envy your happiness tho' your sister would be pleased to be one of the number. We are very lonely we have none with us but Preston [their youngest son]."[50]

In 1796, the Browns followed their sons and Margaret's sisters to Kentucky. In October of that year Agatha Smith informed her Aunt Lettice Breckinridge, "We have had no

intelligence from Aunt Brown, except that they started the 20th of the month, we shall soon I hope have them good People added to the number of relations in this country. . . Mr. [John?] Brown is trying to procure a house in this place for his father and mother."[51]

As the Browns prepared to set off for Kentucky, John Breckinridge and his family left the state to visit Virginia. Lettice Breckinridge, now too old and ill to make the trip, remained behind at John's farm on Elkhorn Creek. John wrote to her from near Cumberland Gap on Wilderness Road. "No accident of any kind has yet happened to us. The children are all in exceeding good Health; & have eaten bear meat every morning for Breakfast since they took the wilderness. Mary Anne [the youngest] Seldom grows fretful & cries to be carried home to you. I ho[pe] in God your Health continues to mend & that you are every day taking a little exercise on Horse back [i.e., a carriage ride] . . . . Let me beseech you My dear Mother to keep your mind as easy & free from care as possible."[52]

In December, Walter Warfield treated Lettice for her affliction. By January 1797, she had moved in with her daughter, Betsy Meredith; additional medicines were ordered. In February, Betsy wrote to John at his inlaws in Virginia. "You appear very anxious to hear from my Mother. She has been extremely ill ever since you left her. I very little thought she would live till this time. Doctor Warfield has

moved to this neighbourhood and visits her 2 or 3 times a week. She has been here ever since you went away and she has had every thing she could wish for to make her situation agreeable but more of her Children to visit her. Uncle and Aunt Brown has been with her 5 or 6 weeks this Winter. Aunt Howard is with her at present. She desires me to tell you to come out as soon as you can, as she don't think it is possible she can live much longer. I don't think myself she can live unless a great change should take place. She wants very much to see you & Billy & James."[53]

While Betsy encouraged her brother to return to Kentucky, William Russell told him that "I was down at Mr. Merediths yesterday evening with Mrs. Russell, and still find Mrs. Breckinridge (your mother) in a very low state of helth [sic]: but flatter myself she will be able to hold out until you return. I have conversed freely with her about her cituation [sic], she seems well contented where she is; and the whole of the family is all attention to her, which gives her great satisfaction."[54]

Letitia Preston Breckinridge, nearly seventy years old, died in March 1797.[55] In the course of her lifetime she made the long journey from Ireland to Kentucky, experiencing life on a succession of frontiers as she went. In 1738, she crossed the Atlantic as a child to join the early settlers

of Augusta County beyond the Blue Ridge in the Valley frontier. There, where her uncle James Patton was among the most important members of the governing elite, she lost her father, grew to adulthood, worked with her mother and sisters, and married the young widower Robert Breckinridge.

In the late 1760s, she and Robert followed her brother William Preston and the shifting frontier southwest to Botetourt County, where they settled along the upper reaches of the James River. There she gave birth to five children. After Robert's death in 1771, she managed her own farm, ran an ordinary, and reared her children. She supplied the Revolutionary war effort with goods and sons and endured the economically disastrous 1780s. She married a son into one of the most prestigious families in the piedmont and saw her daughter wedded into another of nearly equal status. She waited while her sons traversed the Appalachians on surveying expeditions and speculative ventures, and probably voiced an opinion as each, in turn, decided whether or not to move to Kentucky. Through it all she worried incessantly, about her children, about her finances, about all that lay "outside her power."

In 1792, at well over sixty years of age, Lettice followed several children, two sisters, and numerous nieces and nephews to Kentucky. For her it proved the final frontier. At the end of her journeys Lettice Breckinridge died much as she had lived, surrounded by a network of

family and kin. Others--nephews, nieces, and grandchildren --would continue to move on, first to Missouri and Louisiana, and later to the cotton South.

NOTES

1. Walter Warfield to Wm. Fleming, 18 Feb. 1794, Wm. Fleming Papers (hereafter cited as Fleming Papers), Washington and Lee University Library, Lexington, Va.

2. Members of the Preston extended kin network who migrated to Kentucky included Wm. Preston's sister Letitia Breckinridge, her stepsons Alexander and Robert, and her children--John Breckinridge, Preston Breckinridge, and Betsy Meredith--and their families; Preston's sister Ann Smith and her husband and their children--Jane Smith Madison and John Smith--and their families; Preston's sister Margaret Brown and her husband the Reverend John Brown and their sons John and James Brown; and Preston's sister Mary Howard and her family. Members of the Christian extended kin network included Stephen and Mary Christian Trigg and their children, Caleb and Rosanna Christian Wallace, William and Anne Henry Christian and their children, Leonard and Polly Trigg Fleming, Cary and Betsy Fleming Allen, and Walter and Sarah Winston Christian Warfield.

3. Attributed to John Floyd by Letitia Preston Floyd in her letter to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 Feb. 1843, Preston Family Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, microfilm. Floyd supposedly remarked to a group of emigres gathered to organize a government that "he felt he had placed his foot upon the threshold of an empire."

4. See, for examples, Edward Johnson to Wm. Preston, 24 July 1779, Preston Family Papers, box 4, Virginia Historical Society (hereafter cited as VHS), Richmond; Geo. Skillern to Wm. Preston, 17 Aug. 1779, Anna Burton Ellett Papers, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (hereafter cited as VPISU), Blacksburg.

5. On the influx of surveyors into Kentucky in 1773-74, see Sarah S. Hughes, Surveyors and Statesmen: Land Measuring in Colonial Virginia (Richmond: Virginia Surveyors Foundation, Ltd. and Virginia Association of Surveyors, Ltd., 1979), pp. 91 and 102-105. For an overview of the resulting confusion concerning Kentucky land claims, see Willard Rouse Jillson, The Kentucky Land Grants (Louisville: Standard Printing Co., Inc., 1925), pp. 3-12.

6. Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 Feb. 1843, Preston Family Papers, Alderman Library.

7. Wm. Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, 26 Feb. 1784, vol. 1, Breckinridge Family Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as LC), Washington, D.C. See also Alexander Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 4 Mar. 1784 and Wm. Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 5 Sept. 1784, both in vol. 2, ibid.

8. Wm. Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, 26 Feb. 1784, vol. 1 and Alexander Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 4 Mar. 1784, vol. 2, ibid.

9. Wm. Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 5 Sept. 1784; Wm. Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, 6 and 25 Oct. 1784; and Alexander Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 25 Oct. 1784, all in vol. 2, ibid.

10. Alexander Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 8 Nov. 1784, vol. 2, ibid. and Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 Feb. 1843, Preston Family Papers, Alderman Library.

11. Quotations from Jas. Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 18 Mar. 1786, vol. 3, ibid. and Jas. Brown to Jas. Breckinridge, 13 Sept. 1788, Jas. Breckinridge Correspondence, Alderman Library. See also Wm. Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 20 May 1786, vol. 2 and John Brown to John Breckinridge 20 May 1786, vol. 3, both in Breckinridge Family Papers; John Brown to Jas. Breckinridge, 16 Dec. 1787, and 5 Aug. 1788, Jas. Breckinridge Correspondence; and Jas. Brown to Jas. Breckinridge, 12 May and 25 June 1788, ibid.

12. Jas. Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 29 Aug. 1788, vol. 5, Breckinridge Family Papers.

13. Quotations from John Brown to Jas. Breckinridge, 30 Sept. 1788, and Jas Brown to Jas. Breckinridge, 4 Apr. 1790, both in Jas. Breckinridge Correspondence. See also John Brown to Jas. Breckinridge, 23 Oct. 1788, ibid.

14. John Frederick Dorman, The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia (Louisville: Filson Club, 1982), pp. 32-34.

15. Geo. Thompson to John Breckinridge, 2 Mar. 1792, vol. 8, Breckinridge Family Papers.

16. On Polly's desire not to emigrate, see Lowell H. Harrison, John Breckinridge, Jeffersonian Republican (Louisville: Filson Club, 1969), pp. 29-30 and Geo. Thompson to John Breckinridge, 15 Feb. 1792, vol. 8, Breckinridge Family Papers. Thompson remarked, "give my

Complts to Mrs. Breckinridge & tell her if she will go chearfully [to Kentucky] & when there if not well pleased & perfectly satisfyed I will agree she may abuse me as much as she pleases, I'll be agree[d] to receive ten lashes if she don't say when she sees Kentucky as the queen of Sheba did when she went to see Solomon."

17. Quotation from Geo. Thompson to John Breckinridge, 14 June 1792, vol. 8, Breckinridge Family Papers. See also Geo. Thompson to John Breckinridge, 15 Feb. and 2 and 22 Mar. 1792, all in ibid. On arming slaves travelling to or from Kentucky, see also Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 9 Sept. 1783, Fleming Papers.

18. Samuel Meredith to John Breckinridge, 17 May 1792 and Wm. Russell to John Breckinridge, 19 May 1792, both in vol. 8, Breckinridge Family Papers.

19. Wm. Russell to John Breckinridge, 29 Aug. 1792, vol. 8, ibid. Russell's estate, Mount Brilliant, was in Fayette Co., Ky.; he was the son of Wm. Russell, who had married Elizabeth Henry Campbell, widow of Wm. Campbell and sister of Patrick Henry. Louis des Cognets, Jr., The Russell Family in Virginia (Princeton: privately printed, 1960), p. 274.

20. Jas. Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 19 Feb. 1792, vol. 8, Breckinridge Family Papers.

21. John Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, 18 Mar. 1792, vol. 8, ibid.

22. Wm. Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, 30 Aug. 1792, and Lettice Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, Sept. 1792, both in vol. 8, Breckinridge Family Papers. See also Will of Lettice Breckinridge, 19 Sept. 1792, ibid.

23. Lettice Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, Sept. 1792, ibid. On Preston's joining the Baptists, see Benjamin Howard to Anne Fleming, 8 July 1800, Fleming Papers. On his irresponsibility see Harrison, John Breckinridge, p. 35.

24. Samuel Meredith to Lettice Breckinridge, 26 Oct. 1792, vol. 8, ibid. and Wm. Breckinridge to Letitia Breckinridge, 16 Oct. 1793 and 10 Mar. 1794, vols. 9 and 10, ibid.

25. John Breckinridge to Joseph Cabell, 10 May 1793, Breckinridge-Marshall Family Papers, Filson Club, Louisville, Ky.

26. Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming, 15 Dec. 1779, Fleming Papers. See also Stephen Trigg to Anne Fleming, 20 May 1780, ibid.

27. Mary Trigg to Anne Fleming, 13 July 1782 and Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 9 Sept. 1783, both in ibid.

28. Mary Trigg to Anne Fleming, 13 July 1782, ibid.

29. Mary Trigg to Anne Fleming, 12 Jan. 1783, ibid.

30. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 9 Sept. 1783, and Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, 26 June [1786], both in ibid. Although serious, the rift between the Christians and Triggs was not permanent.

31. Wm. Fleming to Anne Fleming, 3 Dec. 1784, and Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 15 Mar. 1785, ibid.

32. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 18 May 1785, ibid. For a discussion of Wm. Christian's decision to move, see chap. 3. Will of Wm. Christian, 13 Mar. 1786, Misc. Papers, Filson Club, mentioned thirty-nine slaves by name.

33. For a discussion of Wm. Christian's death, see chaps. 1 and 3 above. Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, 26 June [1786], Fleming Papers.

34. Phrase is from Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 20 Sept. 1788, ibid., and reads in its entirety,"My Childrens best duty to their dear grandmama, Uncle and Aunt & love to their cousins."

35. For a systematic analysis of the role of interpersonal relationships, including kinship, in shaping migration patterns to an early Kentucky settlement, see Ellen Eslinger, "Migration and Kinship on the Trans-Appalachian Frontier: Strode's Station, Kentucky," Filson Club Historical Quarterly 62 (1988): 52-66. Also cf. John Mack Faragher, Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), esp. chap. 6. Hazel Dicken-Garcia, To Western Woods: The Breckinridge Family Moves to Kentucky in 1793 (Rutherford: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1991) offers a case study of the role of communications in the Breckinridge family's move. My reconstruction and interpretation of the move is based solely on the manuscript primary sources, however, because Dicken-Garcia's work came to my attention to late to be incorporated into the formulation of my argument.

36. Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, 26 June [1786], Fleming Papers.

37. Anne Christian to Anne Fleming, 9 May 1787, and Priscilla Bullitt to Elizabeth Christian, 10 Dec. 1787, both in ibid.

38. Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 17 Aug. and [?] 1787, ibid. See also Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 2 Jan. 1788, ibid.

39. Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 17 Aug. and 30 Oct. 1787, and Sarah Winston Christian to Elizabeth Christian [1787], all in ibid. For an extended discussion of Bullitt's handling of the Christian estate see also chap. 3.

40. Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 20 Sept. 1788, Fleming Papers. See also Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, 25 June 1789, ibid.

41. Alexander S. Bullitt to Wm. Fleming, 12 July 1790, ibid.

42. Harry Innes to Wm. Fleming, 31 July 1790, ibid.

43. Priscilla Bullitt to Anne Fleming, Oct. 1791, ibid.; Lyman Chalkley, Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County 1745-1800 (1912; reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1966) 2:222; Anne Christian to Elizabeth Christian, 17 Aug. 1787, Fleming Papers; Alexander S. Bullitt to Wm. Fleming, 24 Oct. 1789, ibid.; and Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, 28 Apr. 1791, ibid.

44. Priscilla Bullitt to Elizabeth Christian, 10 Dec. 1787, and Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, 25 June 1789, both in ibid.

45. Priscilla Bullitt to Anne Fleming, Oct. 1791, ibid.

46. Priscilla Bullitt to Anne Fleming, Oct. 1791 and 2 Mar. 1792, ibid.

47. Caleb Wallace to Wm. Fleming, 29 Jan. 1793; Walter Warfield to Wm. Fleming, 18 Feb. 1794; Sarah Winston Warfield to Anne Fleming, 13 May and 5 Sept. 1794 and 25 Apr. 1795; Harry Innes to Wm. Fleming, 17 Feb. 1794; all in ibid.

48. Sarah Winston Warfield to Anne Fleming, 5 Sept. 1794 and 25 Apr. 1795 and Eliza B. Christian to Anne

Fleming, 25 Apr. 1795, all in ibid. Cary Allen died soon after.

49. Rosanna Wallace to Anne Fleming, a Apr. 1799, ibid.

50. John Brown to Lettice Breckinridge, 3 Sept. 1794, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 11. See also John Smith to John Brown, 14 Oct. 1783, Preston Family Papers-Davie Collection, Filson Club, typescript; John Smith to John Preston, 22 May 1786, Preston Family Papers, box 5, VHS; John Smith to James Breckinridge [1791], Papers of James Breckinridge, Alderman Library; and Dorman, Prestons, pp. 10 and 22-23.

51. Agatha Smith to Lettice Breckinridge, 24 Oct. [1796], Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 14. See also Elizabeth Meredith to John Breckinridge, 1 Feb. 1797, ibid. On Brown's concerns for his children on the Kentucky and Tennessee frontier see John Brown to John Brown, 10 June 1786, Misc. Papers, Filson Club.

52. John Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 27 Oct. 1796, Breckinridge Family Papers, vol. 14. See also John Breckinridge to Lettice Breckinridge, 20 Oct. 1796, ibid.

53. Elizabeth Meredith to John Breckinridge, 1 Feb. 1797, ibid. See also Walter Warfield to Lettice Breckinridge, 6 Dec. 1796 and James Trottten to Lettice Breckinridge, 7 Nov. and 12 Dec. 1796 and 2 Jan. 1797, all in ibid.

54. Wm. Russell to John Breckinridge, 2 Feb. 1797, ibid. See also Moses Robbins to John Breckinridge, 1 Feb. 1797, ibid.

55. Bill of Walter Warfield to estate of Lettice Preston, 3 Feb. 1798, ibid. and Dorman, Prestons, p. 6, n. 1.

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